ROBERTO GIOBBI'S

CARD COLLEGE

VOLUME 1

A COMPLETE COURSE IN SLEIGHT-OF-HAND CARD MAGIC

Roberto Giobbi's

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Volume 1

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THANKS!

This course is my most ambitious work to date. It would not have been possible in its current, professional form without the help of the following people.

First I would like to thank my wife and friend, Barbara, for the roughly fifteen hundred illustrations she painstakingly drew for this five-volume course; and for her constructive criticism, her concrete suggestions on the form and content of the course, and for her understanding. Without her help this work would never have been written.

I would also like to thank Richard Hatch, who undertook the enormous task of translating my German text with elegance and painstaking precision. Having been a professional translator myself, before adopting my vocation of professional magician, I can vouch for the high quality of his translation. Collaborating with a man who has translated the works of the Viennese genius Johann Nepomuk Hofzinser gave this task an almost mythical flavor for me.

Great thanks go to Stephen Minch, who unites all the qualities it takes to produce a work that yearns to be the best of its kind. His knowledge of the history of magic and of the requisites of performance are only equaled by his skill as a publisher. His suggestions on credits, historical annotations, technical details and matters of instruction have added considerably to make this book easy and pleasurable to read. It is an honor for me to publish my book with Hermetic Press.

Finally, I would like to thank my magical friends, the genial Juan Tamariz, the brilliant Bernard Bilis, the well-read Richard Vollmer and the circumspect Aurelio Paviato, for their direct and indirect suggestions, which have influenced the contents of these volumes.

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Dedication

I dedicate this book to my Spanish magical friends: especially to all the members of the *Escuela Magica de Madrid*; and in particular, to the scholarly Arturo de Ascanio for his intellectual brilliance and paternal care, to the dynamic Camillo Vasquez for his original presentations, his friendship and his humanity, to the intelligent José Carroll for his virtuosity and likability, and finally, to Juan Tamariz, my role model as an artist and a human being.

Foreword

by Juan Tamariz

AT LAST!

Giobbi has done it!

Giobbi, none other than Roberto Giobbi. It had to be someone with the deepest knowledge of the literature of card magic—in English, German, French, Italian and Spanish—someone with an understanding of what is effective and practical for an audience—in other words, a professional magician—someone with a theoretical understanding—having thoroughly studied the theories formulated by the foremost thinkers in magic—someone with experience as a writer, an extraordinary ability to collect, organize, select and summarize this theoretical, practical and literary knowledge—and finally, someone with an understanding of book publishing as a medium. Someone who loves and cherishes our art of performing magic with cards, someone who delights in embracing it, someone who harbors illusions about it...

If only there was someone in the world possessed of all these qualities, if fate would only grant us one such person...

Fate has done so! He exists: Roberto Giobbi!

Roberto Giobbi has studied all the languages I've mentioned. As a professional translator and interpreter; over the course of many years, he has digested hundreds and hundreds of classical and modern texts on magic. He has himself written, published and distributed several famous and fantastic magic books. He is a successful professional magician. He is a personal friend, translator and interpreter of some of the most important magical thinkers (Vernon, Ascanio, Fred Robinson...), and he unites the depth of Germanic thinking with Swiss orderliness and the open-mindedness of the southern Europeans (his parents are Italian and he received some of his training at the *Escuela Magica de Madrid* [Magic School of Madrid]).

I have known and admired Roberto for more than thirteen years. I have worked with him for uncounted weeks at my home in Spain and at the Escorial conferences on card magic. I have enjoyed numerous conventions with him, and I can assure you that he is the perfect man for the job. Humane, intelligent, open-minded, industrious, pedagogically adroit, he is an utterly infatuated connoisseur of our art of card magic.

We can congratulate ourselves: Roberto exists and has given us this priceless work.

But—what of the work itself?

It is a publication that urgently needed to be added to the literature (the publishing house Editorial Frakson purchased the rights to a Spanish translation even before they had read the book, so certain were they of its importance).

In an exquisite and entertaining manner, we are granted an insight into the technical secrets of card magic. Step by step we experience the complete beauty of our art and take delight in the infinite ingenuity selflessly lavished on it by many authors and creators. We learn, in the greatest detail, the most wondrous way to enter the kingdom of card magic.

Some will think, "I already *am* a card expert. I have studied the art for six years and this book is not for me." Perhaps they will not read it.

And these people will never know what they have missed! A book so detailed and clearly written, its contents chosen with such intelligence, is required reading even for someone who has been pursuing card magic for twenty years. I have been doing card magic nearly forty years and intend to study it thoroughly, just as I have its predecessors: books by Padre Ciurò in Spanish, and Jean Hugard and Frederick Braue (*The Royal Road to Card Magic*) in English. For Giobbi's book, written a half century after Hugard and Braue's, brings to light all those things that have been added to the legacy of card magic over the past fifty years.

In this manner there arose from the magical union of a nearly mythic individual (the combination of all his talents would seem the work of either God or the Devil) with literary necessity, a classic of card magic (and to be a "classic" prior to publication is surely the purest magic, isn't it?).

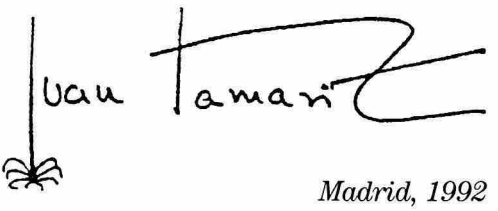
Dear reader, I hope that this book will give you great pleasure, that you will fully enjoy it, that you will find it useful and place it on your night stand, or next to your pillow, or on your desk beside the books by Erdnase, Vernon, Ascanio, Slydini, Tarbell, Marlo, Le Paul, Daley, Al Baker, Annemann, Hugard, Braue, Maskelyne, Hilliard, Robert-Houdin, René Lavand, Kaplan, Gaultier, Hoffmann, Roterberg, Hofzinser, Paul Harris, Jennings and others that you already have, or will soon wish you had.

And—naturally!—beside your deck: our cherished, most beautiful and magical instrument with its fifty-two or fifty-four misplayed pasteboards.

And now I shall conclude (at last!) as I began...

Giobbi has done it!

AT LAST!



Madrid, 1992

Introduction to Volume 1

Dear Reader,

Welcome to my *Card College*, a study course, by the way, that has nothing in common with any class you may have sat in on before. I trust you won't sleep through this one! You may approach it holistically or piecemeal. There are no term papers, no exams, no grades. I want this course to be more fun for you than any other class you've ever had.

Essentially, this is a book on the principles of the art of card magic, not a mere collection of techniques and tricks. It will take us from the history and symbolism of cards, through their physical properties and dexterous handling, all the way to the psychology that both conceals and reveals.

If you understand and apply the contents of this course, you will be able to do anything with cards that your own creativity suggests. Do understand and assimilate the principles in this book. Don't be limited by the individual tricks, the presentations or especially the scripts and gags. Understand why and how at that particular moment precisely this was said or done. Give each technique its due; then—if you are sure you understand the underlying principles— adapt the tricks.

Regarding credits: In my writing I have always been careful to cite the sources, insofar as they are known to me. This gives the inventor of an idea proper recognition and permits you to look up the original description. However, the practice of providing extensive historical credits can give the writing style an academic character. In an attempt to avoid this pitfall, yet still give the interested reader sufficient historical background, I have employed footnotes in the text, which lead to further information in the Bibliographic Notes starting on page 245. More detailed discussions of ideas, plots and concepts have been left to works written for the students and researchers of magic history. I feel that this plan represents—for a book of this type—a fair way to recognize and give thanks to those who have earned it. Omissions are my responsibility and your understanding is appreciated.

I wrote this book for all those readers whose tastes are as simple as my own: I want only the best of everything! I have tried to give you my best in this book. Now you must decide whether I have succeeded.

Roberto Giobbi
Reinach, 1995

The Art of Performing Magic with Cards

A Personal Note

I wrote this course for fun. I truly enjoy analyzing, understanding and describing complex physical, psychological and dramatic sequences as precisely as possible.

Yes, writing this course really was great fun. I hope some of the fun rubs off. I hope that you sense this inner joy and grow to share it as you read each page, study each technique and trick, and finally, at the culmination of this process, give a live performance for an audience. This inner joy springs from the knowledge that one has made something of oneself, that one has exhibited and expressed oneself fully in an artistic sense. Perhaps someday this will change your life, as it did mine when I resolved to make the practice of magic my profession. Perhaps it will also be a constant source of joy, refreshing and relaxing your spirit in your moments of leisure with a creative and challenging activity. In any case, I wish you boundless pleasure.

How to Get the Most from this Book

To get the most fun and profit from this book, follow the advice in this section.

Of course, there are no hard rules on how best to read this book. Your current level of expertise and the goals that inspired you to read it will determine that. Let's assume that you are a novice and have little or no knowledge of card technique. Or perhaps you have done magic for several years, but never bothered to learn the fundamental techniques as a foundation. In either of these cases, I would advise you to study the course from the beginning, taking each chapter in order. Didactically, the book was written with precisely this kind of reader in mind. Be sure to read the section "Instruments and Tools", which will form the foundation of your knowledge.

I believe that a general understanding of the history and symbolism of playing cards is also important, and the section "A Brief History of Playing Cards" will provide you with an overview of this topic. Before you advance to the core of the text—beginning with Chapter 1—familiarize yourself with the terminology employed, by studying the charts of the hand and deck, which are printed on both the front and rear endsheets of this book. These terms will be used frequently in our studies.

No matter what your level of knowledge, I would advise you to read the chapters in order. The techniques and tricks described in each should be mastered, or at least well understood, before you tackle those in following chapters. These techniques are fundamental for a confident handling of the deck and a thorough understanding of card magic. And understanding comes not from reading alone, but from mastering the techniques and tricks.

On the other hand, you can use this book simply as a reference and read only the chapters relevant to your needs. The chapters are basically self-contained and refer back to other chapters only when dealing with complex routines. I deliberately chose mostly short and simple tricks using, when possible, only the technique under discussion. Of course, this was not always practical, since often a card must at least be controlled to be subsequently palmed or switched. But I have avoided complex tricks, which can readily be found in abundance in other works. The bibliography in the back of this volume should facilitate your selection. The tricks were chosen with the goal of motivating you to learn the technique, and to provide you with a vehicle for putting the technique into practice as quickly as possible. It is my hope that this will provide you with rapid success, keeping you moving along the path to advanced card magic as long as possible.

Finally, read each technique and trick description with cards in hand, and work through the steps as they are described. Use a highlighter and a pencil to take notes. For most readers, this will prove the best method. There may be some who prefer first to absorb each description intellectually before working through the instructions with cards in hand. That is perfectly fine. Find the method that works best for you and stick with it until you discover something better. That way you will certainly have the most fun.

The Best Way to Learn from this Book

This course has been designed so that — in theory — each technique can be learned by studying its illustrations. In other words, the purely mechanical aspect of the technique can be understood in a few seconds. But as each technique is an example of physical precision, and the latter is deeply influenced by psychology — that is, your understanding and attitude — the accompanying text expresses all the relevant subtleties I know, such as precise fingerings, pressures, handling, timing, rhythm, control of attention and perception, and many other details that contribute to a successful and artistic execution. You will also find "Check Points" throughout the course, discussions addressing difficulties that often occur while learning the relevant techniques. These points were developed as a result of innumerable private lessons, workshops and lectures. If you are serious in making progress, you can avoid all the stumbling blocks you might encounter by studying the descriptions and advice given in the "Check Point" discussions.

Technique is not merely a means to an end, as some pragmatists will tell you. In my opinion it is a means of expression as well, allowing the artist to put his signature on each trick. Give it the time it deserves.

A Comment on the Illustrations

I have chosen line drawings to illustrate all the techniques and effects. These are generally better suited than a photograph for visually communicating the essentials and details of deck and hand positions — or even a sequence of events. The camera gives equal weight to everything within its field of vision whereas, for a technical description, not everything

is equally important. Line drawings emphasize the important things and omit everything else. This gives the reader a better insight into the essentials of a technique or sequence. Furthermore, line drawings may be reproduced with greater clarity.

The trick descriptions contain significantly fewer illustrations, as they generally use techniques that have already been depicted in detail. Don't let the low quantity of illustrations mislead you regarding the high quality of the tricks.

The illustrations are almost always from the performer's viewpoint. This allows you to compare the illustrated situation with the positions of your own hands and cards. In some cases, the view will be from another angle to clarify a point. These exceptions are noted in the text. They generally show the audience's viewpoint or a view where the cards are transparent. The latter are still from the performer's view, but the transparency allows for a better understanding than a view from below.

On the Terminology

In other books on card magic you will find some terminology at variance with that used here. This is because writers of magic have never adopted a unified technical vocabulary. As many conjuring articles are contributed by enthusiasts, almost invariably without compensation, the authors are most often untrained as writers, and each employs a different means of expressing technical matters. I have made an attempt in this course to formulate a logical and consistent terminology. Much of that terminology is summarized on the maps of the hands and deck that appear on the front and back end-sheets of this book. I think the logic of these terms is reasonably obvious, with one possible exception: my definition of the *outsides* and the *insides* of the fingers. The outsides of the fingers are those sides on the same side of the hand as the thumb. The insides of the fingers are those sides on the same side of the hand as the little finger.

Thinking Beyond What is Immediately Required

I have tried in this course to bring you only the absolute basics of card technique. That does not mean that you will learn only elementary techniques, for you will also be confronted with essential fingerings and handlings. These new fingerings will often require a change in your habits. For many techniques, such as the overhand shuffle, you will say, *"I've been doing that for a long time and it works just fine. Why should I adopt a new position for the little finger?"* Always keep in mind that, though a technique has often worked, this is no sign that it was done properly or that it cannot be done better. In subsequent chapters you will often note that certain advanced techniques really do require the new position or they cannot be executed with certainty. And certainty of execution is one of the prerequisites for self-confidence in performance. You will be learning fingerings in this course that may not be strictly necessary for the tricks described here. But they will spare you many difficulties when you begin to learn more advanced techniques.

Art and Expression in the Handling of Cards

You will often encounter the terms "*economical*" and "*æsthetic*" in this course. They are cornerstones of my philosophy on the artistic and professional handling of cards.

Economical in this sense means linear, direct: doing what must be done without digressions or distractions. The term is meant in both its literal and figurative senses. Literally,

economical means executing a technique without superfluous finger motion. For example, it is more economical to use an open riffle shuffle (page 108) rather than a closed riffle shuffle (page 105) when shuffling normally, because you can get into position more quickly. In terms of handling, economical means the avoidance of unnecessary "hand ballets". And in a dramatic or presentational sense, when considering the structure of a routine, economy demands a direct, logical construction that arouses the spectators' interest and holds it throughout the effect.

In my opinion, *æsthetic* is closely related to economy of motion and construction. A baroque style may have its charm, but in our time does not reflect modern æsthetic tastes. Exceptions may be made if someone plays a character part in a theatrical setting, for example, when Ricky Jay performs "The Exclusive Coterie" by S. W. Erdnase in a Victorian style or when someone performs a trick using an original script by J. N. Hofzinser.

How Much Theory is Necessary?

In my opinion the development of a theory only makes sense if it has practical applications, either directly or indirectly. A theory is only useful when it is understood — and true understanding only comes when an abstract theoretical concept is internalized as a result of experience. The interplay of the real and the ideal produces physical and emotional sensations that are stored up, becoming part of a personal treasure-trove of experiences to be called on. These are general statements, but ones that a study of technique and handling will verify. The analysis of a technique can only be fully understood in the context of a routine. Only here do the purely technical aspects blend with the construction and presentation of an effect. I have, therefore, described at least one good trick for each technique, allowing you to apply the theories provided in the preceding information to a live presentation.

The Path of the Master

If you master the techniques and tricks in this course, you will be more capable than ninety percent of all magicians who do card magic, and you will have the tools of a card expert. I wish you every success on your journey along this path.

The thoughts I've just expressed should really have been my foreword. But it is often said that no one reads forewords because they never contain anything of importance. Which is why I gathered these pronouncements here. I hope you can forgive me this, my first trick of the course.

A Brief History of Playing Cards

Playing cards are the instrument of the card conjurer. The more you know about your instrument, the more sensitively you will handle it and the more expressively you will master it, making it an extension of your personality. It is therefore imperative that you learn some facts (and speculations) regarding the origins and symbolism of playing cards. In addition, the material presented here can form the basis for both intelligent conversations with your spectators and presentations for card effects.

There are as many theories about the origins of playing cards and their introduction into Europe as there are about the origins of the Easter bunny. A plausible thesis maintains that the Arabs brought cards from the Middle East in the fourteenth century and introduced them to Europe via Spain and Italy. Egypt is often cited as the country of their origin, and Egyptian playing cards do bear a remarkable resemblance to the earliest Spanish and Italian decks. The oft-heard claim that gypsies were responsible for their introduction is not supported by the fact that cards were present in Europe before the gypsies were.

The first known mention of playing cards, according to Luis Monreal, in his article "Iconographia de la Baraja Espanola" (*Journal of the International Playing Card Society*, February 1989) occurred in Spain in 1371. The absence of playing cards is telling in the works of both Petrarch and Boccaccio. In Italy, a Florentine city ordinance forbidding a newly introduced card game called *naibbe* is dated May 23, 1376. Cards are not mentioned in England until the fifteenth century, but seem to have first appeared in central and southern Europe at the end of the fourteenth century, lending support to the theory that they were imported, though their exact geographical origins remain obscure.

The expertise of artisans and the ingenuity of the human spirit are wedded in the mysterious deck of cards, making it not merely a mathematical labyrinth and chaos of symbols, but—in the skillful hands of a card magician—a proper stage on which fifty-two actors can be brought to life to represent the entire human condition. There are, in fact, incredible parallels between the world of man and the microcosm of the deck. The duality principle of life—day and night, good and evil, etc.—is symbolized by the colors red and black. The court and spot cards represent the hierarchy underlying the organization of primitive and civilized societies. The four suits symbolize the four seasons, the thirteen cards in each suit represent the thirteen lunar cycles each year, the twelve court cards correspond to the twelve months of the Gregorian calendar (1582), the fifty-two cards are the

fifty-two weeks in the year, the sum of all the pips equals 365 (364 plus one for the Joker!), the number of days in the year. It is particularly curious that, if you spell out the names of all thirteen values, from Ace to King, dealing one card for each letter, the final card of the deck will be dealt on the "g" of *King*. More astonishing still, this works even if you are spelling the words in French, Swedish, Dutch or German (in German the letters "ch" in *Sechs* and *Acht* must be treated as a single letter for this to work.) There is no evidence that the inventors of cards intended these characteristics, though the Alsatian master Ingold explained in his *Das guldien spiel* that the fifty-two cards represented the fifty-two weeks of the year and the four suits corresponded to the four sins of humanity. Thus began a compelling myth, which should not be construed as an accurate analysis of the original allegorical meaning of cards.

In fourteenth century Spain, the four suits represented the four dominant principles of the prevailing society. Diamonds (*oro* = gold, money) stood for capital, Hearts (*copas* = cups, goblets) for the church, Spades (*spadas* = swords) for nobility, and Clubs (*baston* = clubs) for political power. The French followed this pattern closely, renaming the suits *carreau* (Diamonds), *coeur* (Hearts), *pique* (Spades) and *trèfle* (Clubs).

According to a treatise by Johannes von Rheinfelden, a German Dominican priest, the fourteenth century deck already consisted of fifty-two cards, divided into four suits of thirteen cards, just as we have today. Shortly after, a new game, *tarocchi*, was introduced in Italy, using an expanded deck. One card was added to each suit, along with twenty-two additional cards, the *trionfi*. These cards were used for gambling and still serve that purpose today in certain parts of the world. It is not hard to see that this is the famous Tarot deck, which French occultists first used for fortunetelling at the end of the eighteenth century. Only later were the Tarot cards—previously used only for play—introduced without gambling associations into other countries. This likely created the myth that Tarot cards were devised for fortunetelling. Decks with less than fifty-two cards are convenient for some games (piquet, skat, jass, etc.) but are basically incomplete.

Numerous edicts prohibited playing with cards, on both economic and religious grounds. From the beginning they have been the objects of play, which in one form or another involved money as the winner's reward. Those gamblers who wanted to increase their chances of winning, likely developed the first trick techniques with cards. The earliest known reference is dated 1408 in Paris, and describes a card cheat who took advantage of his contemporaries with a game bearing a psychological resemblance to three-card monte. The first card tricks were likely created by people who enjoyed performing. The earliest known description of a card trick also dates back to the fifteenth century. Luca Pacioli (the father of modern accounting) described a performance in which Giovanni de Jasone de Ferara divined a chosen card. This historic tidbit, recently discovered by Vanni Bossi, appears in an unpublished manuscript co-authored by Leonardo da Vinci. The first card effect to be described and explained in print appeared in 1550 in Girolomo Cardano's *De subtilitate*. This effect was the location and identification of a selected card. Three methods are mentioned: the break (see page 28 of this volume), the key-card principle (see Chapter 10) and a reference, bereft of detail, to mathematical methods. In a later, expanded edition of this work, Cardano added an anecdote describing the wonderful card effects of Francesco Soma, a Neapolitan lute player.

Although the sixteenth century saw numerous descriptions and explanations of card tricks, the first detailed exposition was in Reginald Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft* in 1584. In 1593

Horatio Galasso published *Giochi di carte bellissimi di regola, e di memoria* in Venice. Rather than describe tricks dependent on sleight-of-hand, as Scot had, Galasso described tricks having as their basis intelligent applications of mathematical principles, including a stacked deck, possibly the first description of this idea. Scot and Galasso thus laid the foundations on which card conjuring would build during the following two centuries.

Any brief sketch of the history of card conjuring would have to make mention of the following individuals, who profoundly influenced all who followed them: Pinetti of Italy, Robert-Houdin of France, Johann Nepomuk Hofzinser of Austria, Charles Bertram of England and S. W. Erdnase of the United States. The latter wrote the first detailed and precise descriptions of card-cheating methods. His book, *The Expert at the Card Table* (1902) was at first only understood by a few, chief among them Dai Vernon, who must be cited as the last truly outstanding influence on the art. In the first half of the twentieth century many important contributions were made by performers and authors such as Carlo Rossetti, Padre Wenceslao Ciuró, Theodore Annemann, Frederick Braue, Jean Hugard, John N. Hilliard, Professor Hoffmann (Angelo Lewis), August Roterberg, Ottokar Fischer, Conradi-Horster (Conrad A. Horster), Camille Gaultier and Jules Dhotel. More recently the art and literature of card conjuring have been enriched by Arturo de Ascanio, Derek Dingle, Alex Elmsley, Lewis Ganson, Frank Garcia, Phil Goldstein, Bro. John Hamman, Richard Kaufman, Harry Lorayne, Edward Marlo, Stephen Minch, Juan Tamariz and Richard Vollmer, to name just a few.

Without doubt, playing cards are the most fascinating object employed in the art of magic. No less a performer than Hofzinser designated card conjuring the "poetry" of magic. Cards have produced a palette of sciences, from their symbolism of humanity to their numerical properties and all the mathematical possibilities embodied therein. They serve at play and strategy, for fortunetelling and occult practices, and as a vehicle for social communication. They permit an expression of skill and intelligence. Everything is brought together in card conjuring, for there is no effect, no emotion, that can't be expressed with a deck of cards. They are a microcosm reflecting the "human condition", to use Rousseau's expression, mirroring the fate and reality of mankind. Card tricks unite the principles of nature (natural material), of art (creativity, interpretations, self expression, talent), of science (psychological and mathematical principles) and of spirituality (symbolism, personal growth and therapy).

Thousands of human beings have influenced the history of card magic in small and large ways, and hundreds of thousands of magazines and books testify persuasively to this. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, at least one book on card magic is published each week. Perhaps *this* book you now hold will help you to become a part of that history.

I would like to thank my learned friends William Kalush, Richard Vollmer and Vanni Bossi for contributing information that has substantially influenced this essay.

Instruments and Tools

"A young man resolved to become a woodsman. He bought an ax and set to work. At camp that evening, he proudly told his fellow woodsmen that he had felled nine trees. Inspired by his success, he got up an hour earlier the next morning to increase his productivity. He was dead tired that evening, but had only felled eight trees. Now he was really determined. The next day he worked from dawn to dusk without taking a break. Even so, he only managed to fell six trees. Distressed, he sought the council of an experienced woodsman. The woodsman took the young man's ax and ran his thumb several times along the edge of the blade, saying calmly, "Young man, every now and then you should sharpen your ax!"

The Hands

With the cards as your instrument, your hands are the tools that actually determine the success of the card trick being performed. In principle, your hands are your most important tool. And any work of art is generally only as good as the tools employed to create it. In any case, you can only expect the best results if you care for them properly.

The coördination between your thoughts and the movement of your hands is extremely important. In Chapter 27 ("Theory") in *Volume 2*, I shall discuss the topic in more detail. Here I am only concerned with the condition and care of the hands and their relation to the execution of techniques.

Hand and Skin Types

The importance of your hand's skin type is relative. By this I mean that people with all types of skin can, of course, perform magic. But there are certain techniques that are easier for those having somewhat drier skin—for example, thumb and little-finger counts, double lifts and false shuffles—whereas all false deals and some palming techniques are facilitated by a somewhat moister skin. The specific anatomy of your hands will make some techniques easier for you, while others will test your patience. Obviously, huge hands make palming (Chapter 18, *Volume 2*) easier to execute and conceal than small hands, and long fingers better cover the pass (Chapter 19, *Volume 2*) in front. But such an attribute can also have its disadvantages, as even an unsophisticated spectator, upon seeing huge hands, might think, *"Those hands could hide anything."*

Once you know your hand and skin type, you will take note of this relationship and patiently spend more time on some techniques than on others; and you will naturally be happy when

some techniques prove easy for you. From my own experience and the result of polling many experts throughout the world, I can assure you that you can learn every technique, independent of the kind of hand and skin you have, providing you motivate yourself to devote sufficient practice to it, which—as stated earlier—can vary from hand to hand. In the worst case you can console yourself with the knowledge that every technique may be replaced by another technique, or a principle, or a subtlety or ruse.

In this connection let me point out that the anatomy of your hand will change very little during your lifetime—unless you are reading this book as a child. However, several factors (age, environment, climate and stress) are responsible for a change in skin types. From birth to my mid-twenties, I had very moist hands. Around age twenty-six, my skin got drier. This can also be measured in terms of one's use of decks: I used to need three to four decks each week. Now I need only that many a month.

Hand Care

This is not a short course on manicure, but the topic must be addressed. Your hands will be on constant display during performance. Can you risk having them not look their best? Here I shall outline a few of the basic principles of hand care. Pay attention to your hands, for they represent your greatest investment in the art of performing magic with cards. Well groomed hands will give you the same feeling of well being as wearing a freshly laundered and pressed shirt.

Your hands will quickly become soiled as you practice. The dust all around us will stick to the sweat and oils of your hand to make them dirty. Soiled hands in turn shorten the lifetime of your deck, even with plastic cards, which otherwise last a long time. Before practicing and, of course, before every performance, wash your hands with a mild soap. I personally use an alkali-free pH 7 soap. Such neutral soap removes dirt without harming the natural oils of the hands. This keeps the hands from drying out after washing, and leaves you with practically the same feeling in your fingers after washing as before, so that your practice session can continue unimpeded. Try different soaps and, when you find the one that is best for you, stick with it. If you have very moist hands, you can find creams in drugstores that will keep your hands dry. This can be a great help during practice and performance. I used them for years.

If you have normal or somewhat dry hands, I recommend that you apply a cream after each washing. Use a formula that is quickly absorbed and non-greasy—your cards will thank you. You can skip the cream after the practice-session washings.

The appropriate length of your fingernails is partly a matter of taste, but short nails facilitate the execution of most techniques and generally look better. Nail biting is absolutely taboo—break the habit, even if it means visiting a hypnotherapist. Pay just as much attention to your cuticles. My advice: Go at least once to a professional manicurist, paying close attention to the procedure and getting professional advice on the proper care of your nails. Then buy a good pair of nail shears, a cuticle remover and a good cream, compatible with your skin type.

The Playing Cards

Let me state right away that the perfect card does not yet exist. And most likely it never will, for not only do numerous objective and often conflicting criteria enter into the

equation, but also one's personal tastes and sensibility. It may well take you years to find the cards you like best.

There are as many brands of cards as there are grains of sand on the proverbial seashore. A good card consists of three layers: a thin face layer with a treated outer surface, a center layer for stiffness, and a thin back layer that also has a treated outer surface. The quality of the card is determined by the quality and grain of the paper, the glue and the treatment of the outer surfaces.

Card Decks

For your own use and in performance, use a standard fifty-two card deck plus the accompanying jokers. If you can do magic with a fifty-two card deck, other decks will pose no problems, whereas the reverse is certainly not the case.

Smaller decks, such as the French piquet pack or the German skat deck, each of which has only thirty-two cards, or the Swiss jass deck with thirty-six cards or the Spanish and Italian decks with forty, are best reserved for special routines centering around games using those cards.

Card Size

The fundamental distinction here is between poker- and bridge-size cards, although there are also miniature decks and jumbo decks. Poker-size decks are somewhat wider than bridge-size decks. Many card-conjuring hobbyists favor the bridge size. Various reasons are given; for example, the smaller cards are more easily concealed in the palm. However, many amateur and professional card conjurers use poker-size cards. Here I shall outline the pros and cons of each, so that you may make your own decision.

- Poker cards have more surface area available to press against.
- The faces of the cards, including the pip cards, are larger and, therefore, more æsthetic.
- Poker cards are more pliable thanks to their greater width. This makes techniques like the double lift and riffle shuffle easier and more attractive to execute.
- If you practice with poker-size cards, you can always perform with bridge-size cards if offered a borrowed deck. This is analogous to practicing with large coins, then performing with smaller ones, or warming up with a medicine ball for a basketball game. The reverse situation may produce great difficulties. How will it seem to your audience if you said, "Oh, I'm not used to these wide cards."
- Poker-size cards are better for many tricks and techniques: providing cover for false and controlled riffle shuffles, coin transposition tricks under cover of cards, etc.
- Poker-size cards are wider throughout the world. In Europe, however, laymen prefer bridge-size cards.
- Poker-size cards are generally manufactured by companies who also supply casinos with decks. They must be trustworthy brands or they would not be used by gambling establishments. This is your best defense if someone accuses you of using marked cards. The U. S. Playing Card Company of Cincinnati, Ohio—the manufacturer of Bicycle, Bee and Tally-ho decks—supplies most of the U.S. casinos with their cards.

- Bridge-size trick decks are widely available to the general public. But only the most sophisticated laymen know that poker-size trick cards exist. Even some magicians fail to suspect trick cards when poker-size cards are used.
- In my experience, poker-size cards are generally better quality and have more attractive back designs. Would you want to work with less than the best and most appealing?
- Poker- and bridge-size cards are equally easy to palm, independent of your hand size. The determining factor here is technique.
- The use of poker cards has become a status factor in the profession: experts use poker-size cards. This is, admittedly, a debatable point.

My advice is to use poker-size cards from the very beginning, for *practical reasons.* You can easily switch to bridge-size cards at anytime, but to do the reverse would be quite difficult.

The Finish

Among the many designations used to categorize the treatment of the outer layers of playing cards, the most commonly seen are plastic coated, linen finish, resilient linen finish, air-cushion finish and Nevada finish.

Buy one of each of these decks and experiment with them. But be prepared to change your preference in the course of time. Criteria that seem important to you when you begin your study may seem less so as you become more expert.

The advantage of plastic coated cards is that they last longer and generally stay flat. But they also cling less to one another, which can make them difficult to fan evenly. Some advanced techniques, though, like second, bottom and center dealing, as well as pull-through shuffles, are made easier with reduced friction between cards.

Face and Back Designs

The best back designs for the card conjurer have a white border. Prominent examples are Bicycle Rider Backs and Tally-ho Circle Backs. Borders are more pleasing æsthetically. They also relax the eye and facilitate the execution of many techniques in which a card is reversed in the deck.

For gambling routines, though, cards with an overall back design, particularly the Bee and Steamboat brands, are recommended, as such cards are generally used in professional gambling. This is because of the widely held belief that such cards are more difficult to mark on the back—which is a total myth.

The Card Case

Use cards that come in a cardboard case. Aside from the fact that these cases are the most common with better brands, the case itself has many magical uses. Some cards will also be wrapped in foil or wax paper inside the case, an additional sign of quality.

Treating the Cards

Some magic books tell you that the cards must be specially treated. Generally this is in reference to cards for the stage manipulator. Cards for close-up performances need not be treated. Forget about fanning powder or zinc sterate—simply use a good quality new deck. Decks with rough edges, or ones that do not spread evenly must be broken in. But stop before your perspiration penetrates the edges of the cards.

General Remarks

Once you have found the cards that work best for you, stick with them until you have a compelling reason to switch. Work exclusively with these cards. You can put together most trick decks yourself or—for certain popular brands—order them from a magic store. You can also make trick cards to match most decks yourself or have them made for you.

Whether performing for a large or small audience, always use a new deck or one in new condition. New cards guarantee optimal execution of techniques and identify you as a polished artist, one who pays attention to detail; so don't try to skimp on this. Never forget that the deck of cards is your instrument.

The Close-up Pad

When you perform, you should be able to do certain tricks on any surface. Whether you have a special pad or mat, a padded or unpadded table cloth, or the bare table, as a magician you should not be dependent on the surface.

Nevertheless, in practice sessions and in most performances—certainly in formal performances—you should arrange for every possible advantage. In addition to warm, well-cared-for hands and a new deck, a proper pad to perform on belongs in your arsenal.

Pad Size

Use as large a pad as possible, since this permits larger motions. The smallest pad you should consider is sixteen inches by twenty. A pad smaller than this will produce cramped handlings and prevent clear and attractive displays when cards are set out. I personally use a wooden card table with folding legs, its top measuring thirty inches square and covered with velvet, for my performances.

Material

The underside of the pad should be made of slip-proof rubber, the top side of velvet or velvet-like material. Avoid felt, which becomes fuzzy, gets under your fingernails and soon leaves the top looking used. Between the top and bottom layers of the pad there can be an interface of sponge rubber to provide necessary softness.

Some experts swear by very soft pads, though I personally prefer a somewhat firmer surface. A variety of pads are available through magic stores, or you can make a very nice one yourself. But don't skimp here either. This is one of your primary tools and all your tools should be of the finest quality.

Color

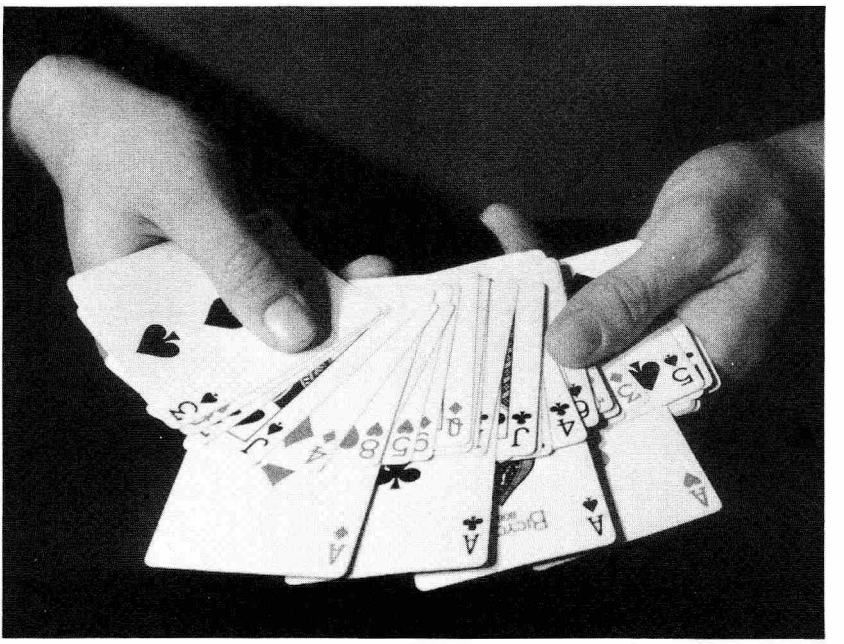
Green is considered a calming and neutral color, which is why many surfaces made for card playing are green. I prefer a pure, dark blue, since I generally work with red cards. Black is also good when using red cards, and can look striking with coins, cups and other pretty props as well. A deep, dark red or an elegant mustard yellow is also viable. The color is surely a question of taste, but you should avoid bright colors, which irritate the spectators' eyes.

CHAPTER 1

FUNDAMENTAL TECHNIQUES

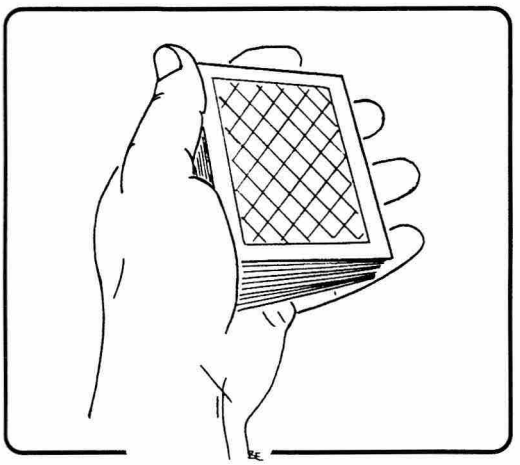
"A man without a foundation is like a ship without a rudder and compass, buffeted here and there by every wind."

Samuel Smiles

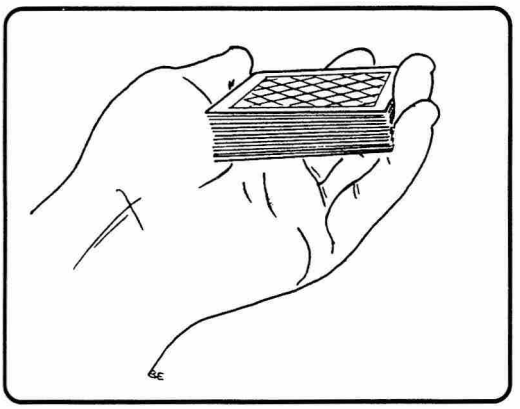


This chapter should be studied first, as it defines and details essential card techniques on which everything is built. The terms and handlings taught here are used repeatedly in the chapters to follow. A thorough understanding and mastery of this material is necessary to grasp and attain all that is to come.

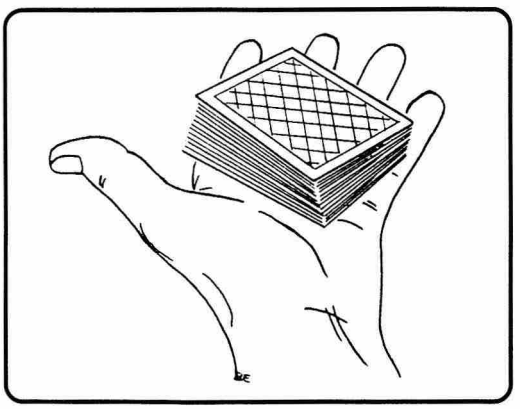
Dealing Position



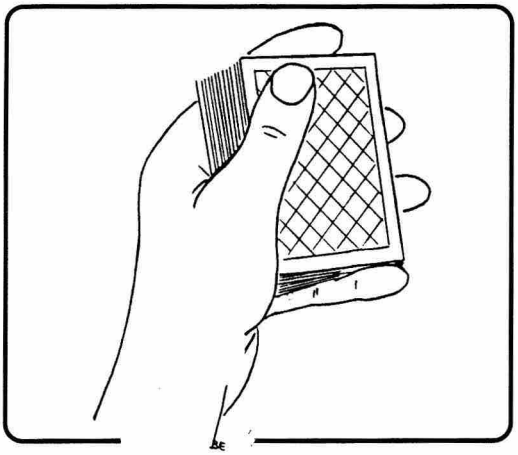
This is the most important of all positions. The cards are generally held in this grip when they are in your possession but not in active use or, as the term implies, when you are dealing the cards. Study the exact position of each finger in the illustrations, as each has a specific function in certain techniques.



The deck "floats" in the left hand. It neither rests on the palm nor is it clutched by the fingers. The lower right edge of the deck rests on the outer joints of the middle, ring and little fingers. Thus only the outer phalanx of each of these fingers touches the right side. The index finger prevents the cards from sliding forward. The lower outer edge of the deck contacts both the outer and middle joints of the index finger. The lower, inner left corner of the deck rests near the lower heel of the thumb. The thumb can rest either along the left side of the deck or on top. The deck is beveled to conform to the anatomy of the hand.



This next position shall be referred to as the *open dealing position*. Extending the thumb to the left and the fingers to the right expresses non-verbally that everything is fair and above board. The hand looks relaxed, so this position should be taken whenever possible. It encourages the impression that you are exerting the barest minimum of control over the cards.



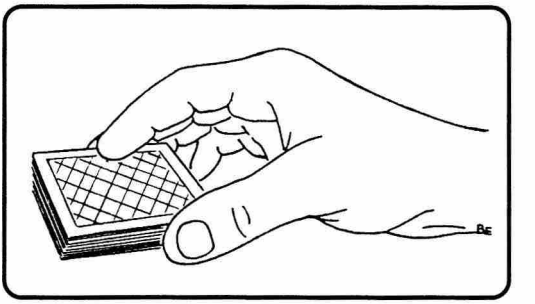
This position will be referred to as the *straddle dealing position.* In contrast to the other positions, the little finger is at the inner end of the deck. This grip offers the firmest and securest control of the deck and is required for the successful execution of certain techniques. This position should only be taken immediately prior to the execution of those techniques.

Check Points

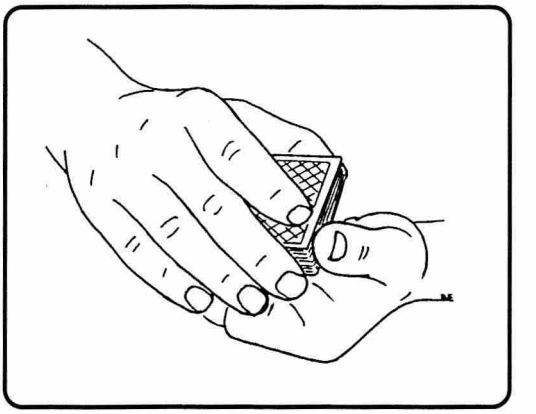
1. How firmly should you hold the deck? Imagine the deck is a bird: Hold it firmly enough to keep it from flying away, but not so firmly as to crush it.
2. To obtain a smooth bevel of the deck, slide the left thumb lightly over the left side of the cards, from bottom to top.
3. Don't make the mistake of assuming that you already know this technique. Yes, you've held cards in your hand all your life, but where was your index finger? It's like the fourth string of a violin: Without it, there's no symphony. Never forget the index finger!
4. Deviations from this dealing position will be required by certain techniques and will be detailed in the relevant descriptions.

The End Grip

This position is often used when the right hand cuts the deck or lifts it from the table or the left hand. The illustration shows the open end grip. The deck is held near its right corners between the thumb and middle finger. The ring and little fingers rest neatly alongside the middle finger, and the outer phalanx of the index finger is bent in, so that the fingertip rests on top of the deck.



This illustration, shown from a front view, shows the covered end grip. Here the deck is held by the right thumb, middle, ring and little fingers. The ring finger touches the outer right corner of the deck. As in the open end grip, the outer phalanx of the index finger is bent and the fingertip touches the top of the deck, practically at the left border.

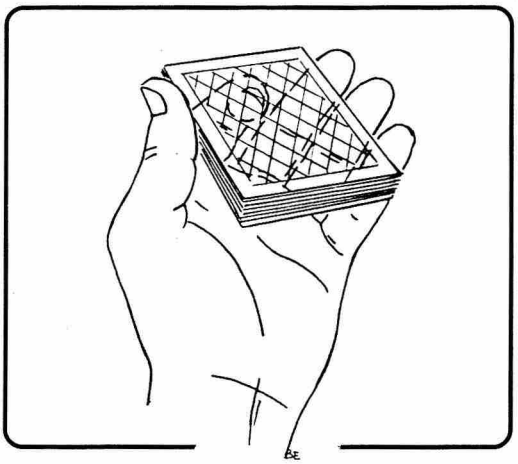


Check Points

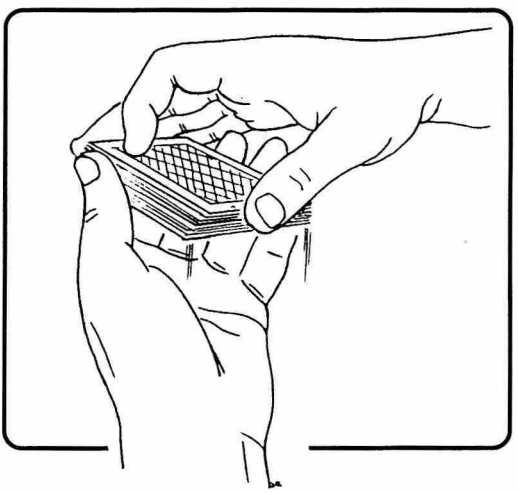
1. A common mistake is to hold the right fingers almost perpendicular to the deck. Look closely at the illustrations. The thumb and the back of the deck make an angle of about thirty degrees, as do the other fingers at the front. This is true of both end grips. In the illustration of the covered end grip one can see how this allows the outer right corner of the deck to contact both the middle phalanx of the little finger and the inner phalanx of the ring finger. If the deck is beveled slightly to the right, the outer right corners of the top few cards slide naturally between the ring and little fingers.
2. The open end grip is so named because the majority of the deck is visible. In contrast, the covered end grip has the advantage of masking the thickness of the deck from the front. It is often used when the right hand holds more or fewer cards than claimed.

Elevated Dealing Position

This position should always be used when the deck needs to be displayed with particular clarity. The emphasis achieved draws greater attention to the deck and should, therefore, only be used when such attention is desired. The fact that the deck is held at the fingertips, away from the palm, makes it appear less firmly held and controlled. As a result, this position gives an impression of extreme fairness.



Hold the deck in the left hand, as shown in the illustration. The index finger is bent under the deck, with the fingernail touching the bottom of the deck. (The illustration shows a transparent view.) The weight of the deck is actually supported by the index finger. The other fingers only hold the deck lightly. In the elevated position, the index finger can also be placed at the front end of the deck.

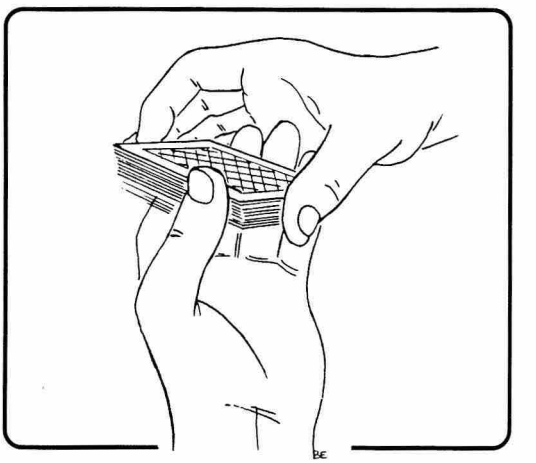


To reach this position from regular dealing position, take the deck in right-hand end grip, while moving the left index finger underneath the deck to the face of the bottom card. Lift the left side of the deck with the right hand, sliding the side along the inside of the left thumb and stopping at the center of the thumb's outer phalanx. The right side remains where it is, acting as a pivot point. The deck is now in the elevated dealing position. This position can also be reached without the use of the right hand, using the curled left index finger to raise the left side of the deck.

Squaring the Deck

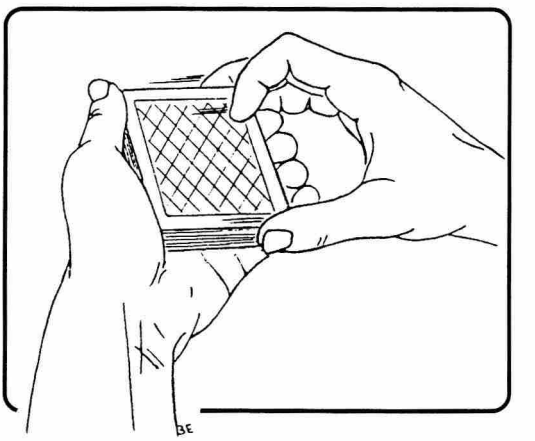
You will encounter this term often in this course, so we will define the handling precisely. Later this squaring technique will be employed with a break, a step or an injogged card to achieve advanced techniques.

Using the right hand, bring the deck from dealing position to elevated dealing position as previously described. Continue to hold the deck in end grip. The right hand controls the cards during the initial phase of the squaring. The left fingers and thumb slide inward along the sides of the deck, then outward. This action can be repeated several times. Each time the thumb slides from the outer left corner to the inner left corner and back again.



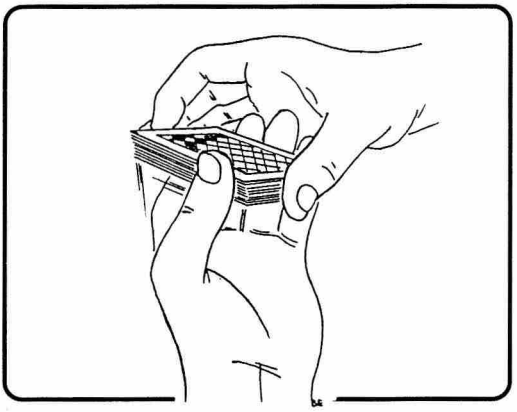
Without changing grips, the left hand takes control of the deck. This transfer of control is naturally invisible, since the change is only one of finger pressures. The right fingers now slide from left to right along the ends. Thus the deck has been squared along the ends as well as the sides. Lower it once again to standard dealing position.

When you square the deck in the hands, always do it this way, as the handling at the fingertips visually implies extreme fairness.

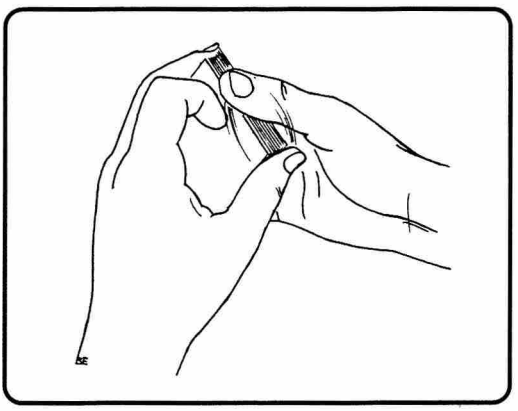


The All-around Square-up

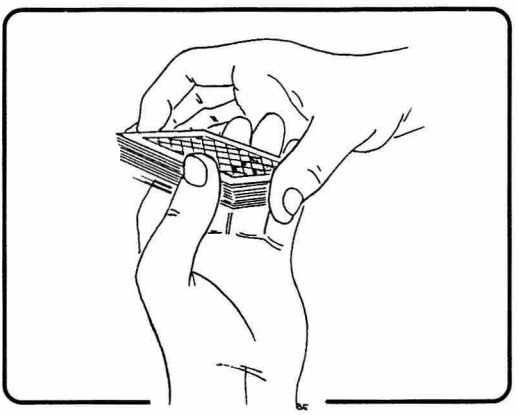
This technique is used to square the deck in the hands, but it is also a prerequisite for numerous advanced techniques.



Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position. The right hand takes it in end grip and lifts it to elevated dealing position. The left index finger is bent under the deck, so that its nail contacts the bottom.



The right hand begins to turn the deck clockwise. The bottom of the deck pivots on the nail of the left index finger. Simultaneously, the left hand turns counterclockwise. After the deck has been turned about ninety degrees, the left thumb will be on what was the right side of the deck and the left middle, ring and little fingers will be on what was the left side. The deck at this point is practically vertical. This position is held for only a fraction of a second.



The left fingers take control of the deck and continue its clockwise rotation. This returns the cards to elevated dealing position. They are briefly squared along the sides and ends, and finally lowered to normal dealing position. During this square up, the deck has been rotated a hundred eighty degrees.

Giving the Deck a Complete Cut

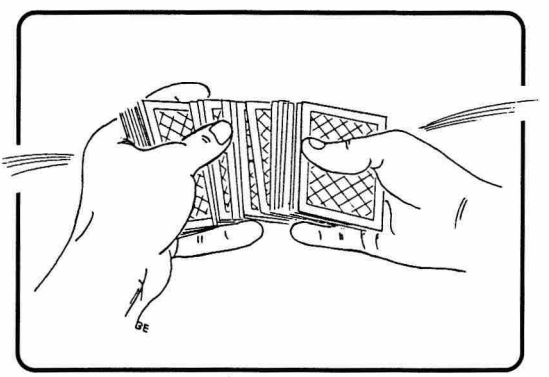
Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position; then bring the right hand over the deck, grasp the upper half in end grip, lift it and place it on the table. Return the right hand to the deck, grasp the remainder in end grip and place it on top of the cards on the table. Immediately lift the entire deck in end grip and return it to left-hand dealing position, where you then square it.

In placing the halves on the table, let them drop from an inch or so above it, rather than simply setting them down. This gives the procedure a more elegant and innocent appearance.

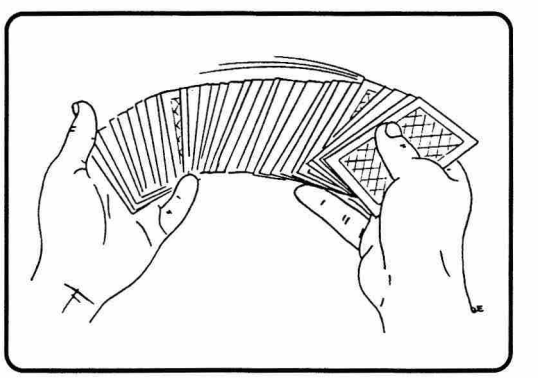
Spreading the Cards in the Hands

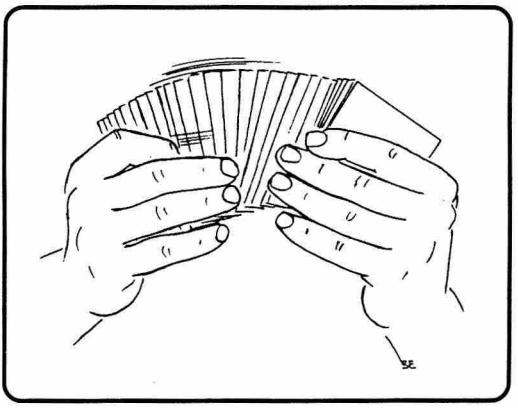
This technique will be used often with the cards either face up or face down. Once again we are analyzing a procedure with which you may feel you are already completely familiar, for who has not spread the deck between the hands when picking out cards? But pay attention here to the positions of the fingers and the manner in which cards are pushed from hand to hand. This technique is the foundation on which such sleights as the classic force (Chapter 15) and spread cull (Chapter 13), among others, will be erected.

Hold the deck in left-hand straddle dealing position. Tip the outer end of the deck up about thirty degrees, so that the inner end rests on the inside of the little finger. With the left thumb, begin to push the top few cards to the right, where they are received by the palm-up right hand. Simultaneously, shift the left index finger from the outer end of the deck to a position beside the left middle finger on the right side. Also note the position of the right little finger at the inner end of the deck. The hands form mirror images of each other.

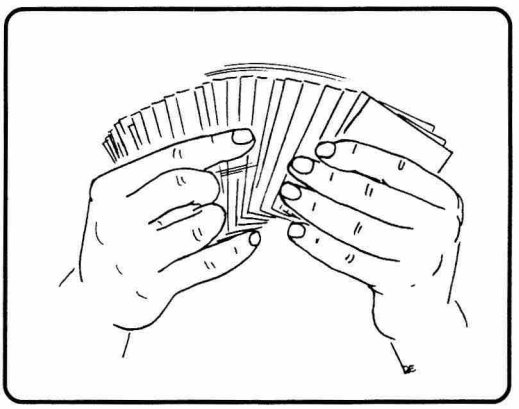


The right hand grasps the right edge of the top card in the fork of the thumb and moves to the right, while the left thumb pushes more cards to the right.





The right index, middle and ring fingers work under the resulting spread to keep the cards flowing from left to right. The index finger alternates with the middle and ring fingers (these two acting as a unit) to pull cards to the right. This illustration from below shows the index finger just after it has pulled a few cards to the right, while the middle and ring fingers are being extended.



Here you see the right middle and ring fingers contracted, having pulled cards to the right, while the index finger extends to receive the next batch of cards. The fingers under the spread may be imagined to be the legs of a tiny man walking across the underside of the cards. The hands can move together and apart, "accordion" style, or remain stationary.

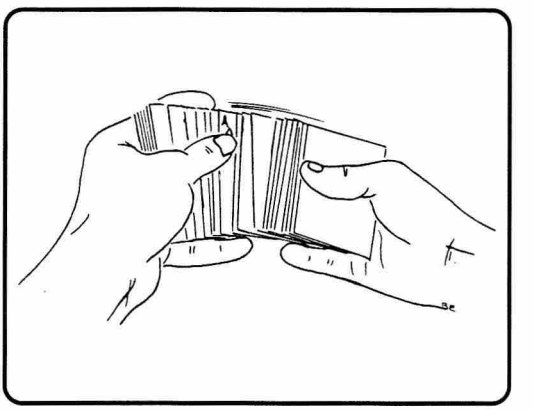
Check Points

1. The "flow" of the spread between the hands results from the alternating push of the left thumb and pull of the right index, middle and ring fingers.
2. Viewed from above, the motion of the cards resembles that of a conveyor belt. This makes an æsthetic and even somewhat magical impression on the viewer.
3. The position of the little fingers is critical. They not only give the spread stability between the hands, but permit the cards to be extended in a wider and more attractive spread.

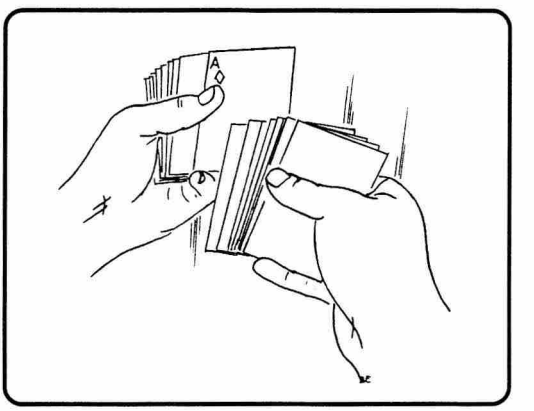
Outjogging Cards as They are Spread Between the Hands

The purpose of this technique is to pick cards out of the deck, then place them elsewhere in the deck or on the table. Let's assume we want to remove the four Aces, which are distributed evenly in the deck.

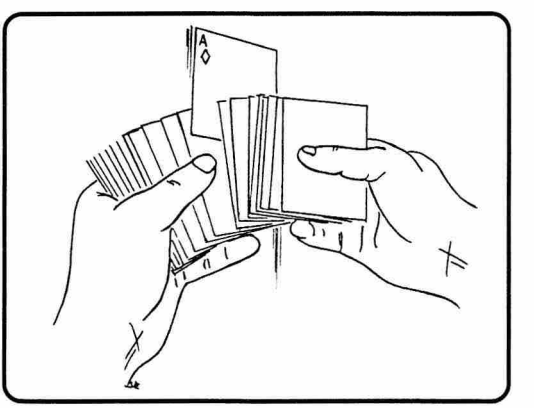
Spread the cards face up between the hands, using the spreading technique just described. As soon as you come to the first Ace, place the left thumb on its left side.

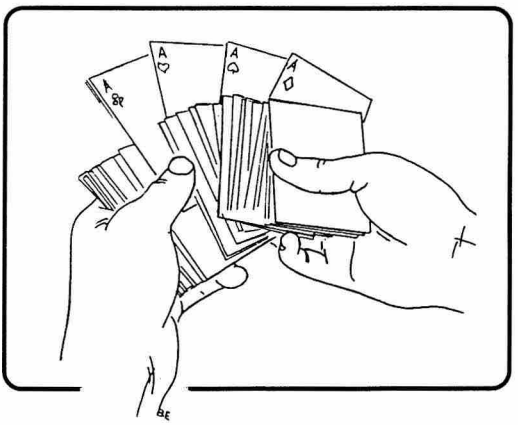


Move the right hand inward with its cards and the left hand outward until about three-quarters of the Ace is exposed. Contact the back of the Ace at its inner right corner with the right index finger and press it against the card directly above it.



Now move the right hand forward, so that the cards spread in the right hand are even again with those in the left. The Ace now extends from the front of the spread for about three quarters of its length. (This position is called an *outjog*.)



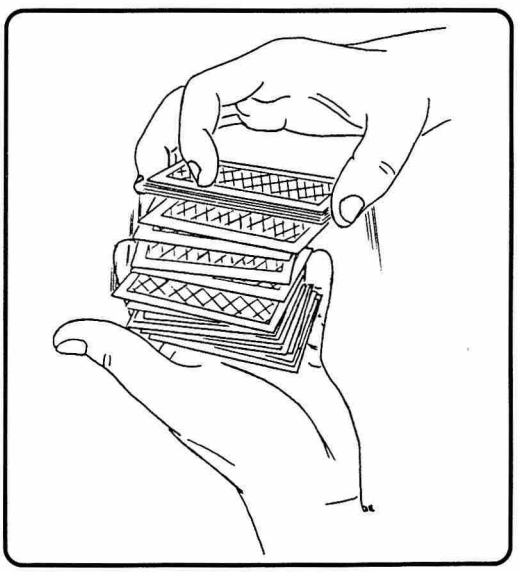


Resume the spreading of the cards until you come to the next Ace. This is outjogged in the spread in the same manner as the first Ace. The procedure is repeated two more times, until all four Aces project from the deck.

How you proceed from this point depends on the requirements of the effect being performed. The various handlings will be detailed in the context of the trick descriptions.

Dribbling Cards

This technique has numerous uses. Among them are: as a flourish, as a method for having a card chosen, as a demonstration of the performer's lack of control over the cards, and as a way to prepare for a palm.



Hold the deck in left-hand straddle dealing position. With the right hand take it in end grip, lift it about four inches above the left palm, then bring it back down. During this up-and-down motion, let the cards fall singly or in very small packets from the bottom of the deck. Begin this "dribble" as you raise the cards, facilitating their release by a light but firm downward pressure of the right index finger on the deck. The cards should be released at an even speed, producing a soft riffling sound.

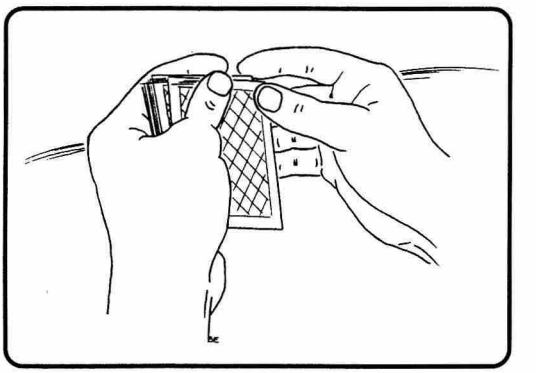
Dealing Cards

Dealing cards would seem to be so elementary a topic, the reader may wonder why it is necessary to discuss it at all. But once again there is a right way and a wrong way to do things. Initially, either would serve the purpose equally well, but for advanced techniques precise positions of the fingers are critical. We will describe two methods of dealing. Most of the other variations follow from these techniques.

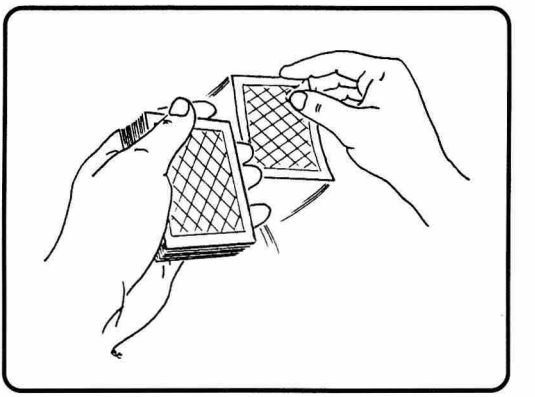
Dealing Cards Face Down— The Draw Method

As dealing techniques generally originated at the gaming tables, it is not surprising that their nomenclature comes from that source. The *draw method* refers to the manner in which cards are dealt in draw poker.

Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position. The heel of the palm rests lightly on the table or "floats" very slightly above it. As the right hand approaches the deck, the left thumb pushes the top card slightly to the right. The right middle finger enters the gap between the left index and middle fingers and contacts the index of the top card with the outside of the outer phalanx rather than with the fingertip. Grip the outer right corner of the top card between the right thumb (on the back) and middle finger (on the index).



With the right hand, carry the card diagonally forward to the right, and place it on the table. The transparent view of the card being dealt shows the position of the right middle finger.

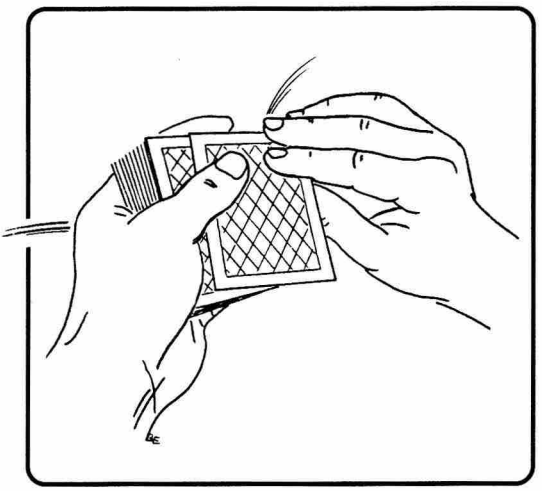


Check Points

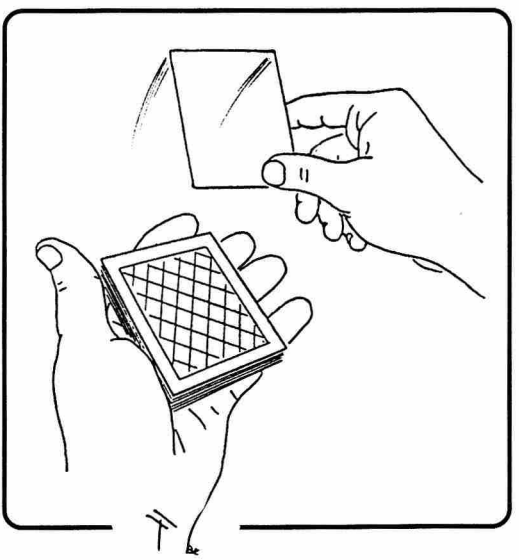
1. As the right hand approaches the left to take a card, the left hand rolls slightly inward to the right on the heel of the palm, then rolls back. This is repeated throughout the dealing. This small, natural, rocking motion makes the deal more pleasing to the eye while it aids the right hand in grasping the top card.
2. The angle of the deck with respect to the horizon is between twenty degrees (in rest position) and forty-five degrees (in dealing position).
3. When the card is placed on the table, it should not be done with a noisy *click* or *snap*, but with a gentle firmness. The only sound one should hear during the deal is the quiet sound produced by the cards as they slide over the top of the deck.

Dealing Cards Face Up— The Stud Method

Stud method refers to the manner in which cards are dealt in the game of stud poker, the poker variant in which some cards are dealt face up.



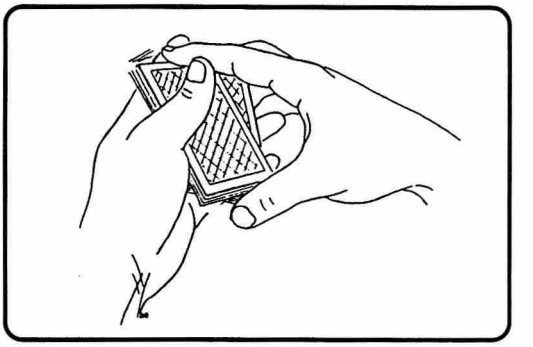
Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position and push the top card to the right with the left thumb. Grasp the card with the right hand as shown in the illustration. The index and middle fingers contact the back of the card at the outer right corner, while the thumb lies on the face at the index.



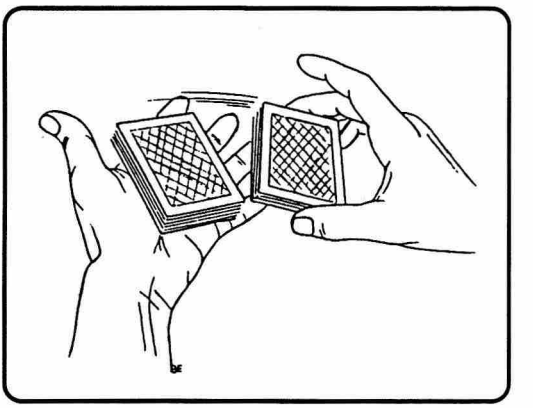
Push up with the right thumb as you push down with the fingers. At the same time, rotate the right hand a quarter turn outward at the wrist. This turns the card end over end and face up. From this position place it on the table.

The Swing Cut

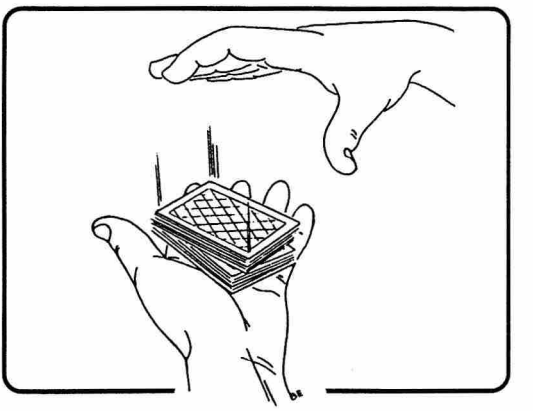
Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position. Then, with the right hand, grasp it in open end grip. Extend the outer phalanx of the right index finger to contact the front end of the deck. At the same time, move the left index finger slightly away from the deck to make room for the right fingers. With the right index finger, lift approximately half of the deck at the front end, raising it simultaneously forward and to the left. Care should be taken that the outer right corner does not become caught on the right middle finger.



Grip the outer left corner of the upper half in the fork of the left thumb, near the base of the index finger. Then move the left hand to the left with the upper half of the deck and assume an open dealing position.



Set the right hand's portion on top of the left hand's cards, or simply let the packet drop onto them. This completes the cutting sequence.



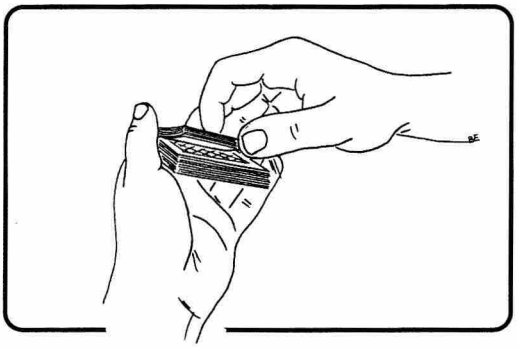
Check Point

By taking the deck in open end grip, the right middle finger shouldn't interfere with the leftward swing of the upper half of the deck. Nevertheless, in lifting the upper half at the outset, the outer right corner of the packet can get caught on this finger. To prevent this, concentrate on lifting the cards simultaneously forward and to the left.

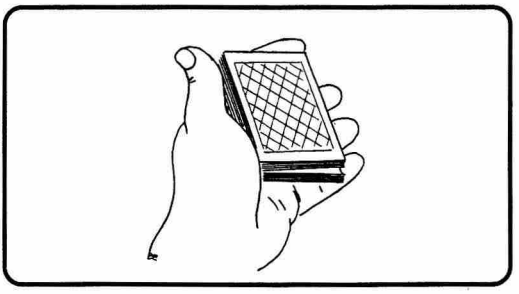
The Break

A break serves to hold a gap between two or more cards or packets, using one or more fingers or a portion of the hand. The breaks are classified according to their function and utility, and are generally held with very specific parts of the hand.

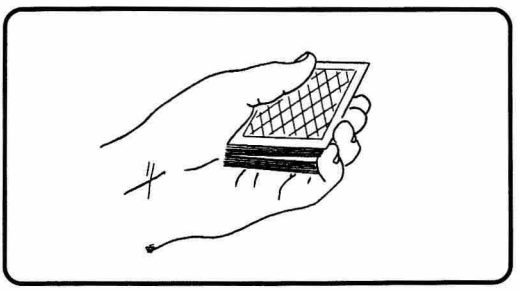
The Little-finger Break



Hold the deck in left-hand elevated dealing position. With the right thumb, lift about half the deck slightly at the back end. The pad of the left little finger should extend over the upper right edge of the lower half of the deck.



Release the upper portion of the deck, letting it fall back onto the lower packet, but with the pad of the left little finger caught between the halves near the inner right corner on the right side. Lower the deck to standard dealing position. The left hand is now holding a break with the little finger.



The deck appears squared. To prevent the break from showing on the right, the deck may be held obliquely, with the right side lower than the left. The left index, middle and ring fingers may also be moved so that they lie together along the right side. The left little finger is only pressed lightly against the break, so that the edges of the cards on the left side and at the front do not jut from the deck, causing a visible ridge or irregularity. To help prevent this, the left thumb lies on top of the deck, applying light but firm pressure. The packets are controlled primarily by pressure between the inside of the outer joint of the thumb and the base of the index finger. Imagine that you have a screw passing perpendicularly through the deck between these two pressure points.

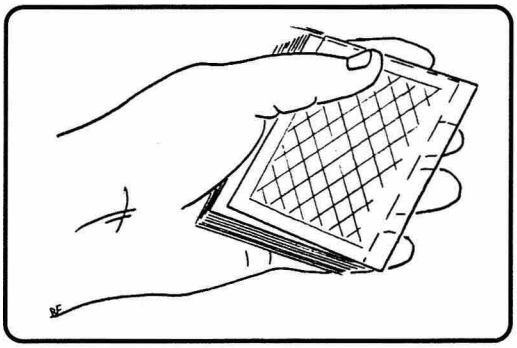
Check Points

1. Note in the illustrations that approximately half the outer phalanx of the left little finger extends past the inner right corner of the lower packet. This ensures that the break is hidden, particularly when the index, middle and ring fingers lie together along the side of the pack.
2. How large should the break be? For the sake of clarity, the break has been exaggerated in the illustrations. Once you have gained confidence with this technique, the break will be about an eighth of an inch wide. Of course, it can be somewhat larger or smaller, depending on how fleshy the pad of your little finger is.
3. Practice holding a break under the top card of the deck, then under the bottom few cards. This situation will present itself as often as the need to hold a break in the center of the deck. In all cases, it is critical that the top of the deck remain perfectly flat. Often when a break is held under the top card, its inner right corner is bowed upward. Never be guilty of this, as the resulting "ski-jump" is a tip-off.
4. When a break is held, it should not be visible at the front of the deck. Unfortunately, this is often the case with brand new decks, especially with plastic coated cards. The slickness of the cards causes the packets to separate. To prevent this, hold the deck in a secure but relaxed grip, with the thumb on the deck, as mentioned above, keeping everything in check with a light pressure. Remember the metaphor of the bird: Hold it tightly enough to keep it from flying away, but gently enough not to crush it.
5. Practice maintaining a break as follows: Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position. Lift off about half the deck with the right hand, this time completely separating both packets. Replace the right-hand portion, catching a break with the pad of the left little finger. Square the deck while holding the break, so that no irregularity of the cards is visible. Lift off the cards above the break and repeat the procedure. This not only teaches you how to catch a break, but how to cut to it.

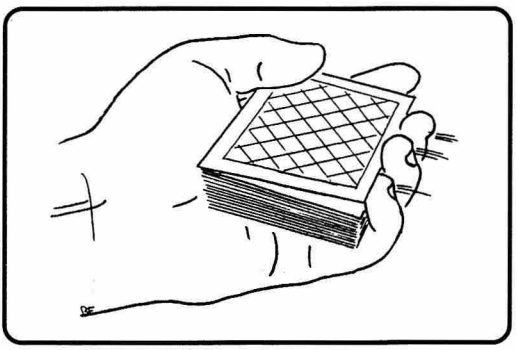
Forming a Little-finger Break Under the Top Card—Two-handed Method

To take a break under the top or first few cards of the deck, proceed as described above, with but one change; a most important one: Do not lift the top card with the right thumb; rather lower the deck with the left hand under cover of the top card. This prevents the top card from visibly rising and flexing, a fatal and frequently made mistake.

Forming a Little-finger Break Under the Top Card—One-handed Method



Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position. With the muscles of the hand—in particular the heel of the thumb—bevel the deck to the right. In the same motion use the thumb to push the top card to the right a distance equal to the width of its white border (about three-sixteenths of an inch). You will feel the right edge of the card as it slides over the pads of the middle and ring fingers.



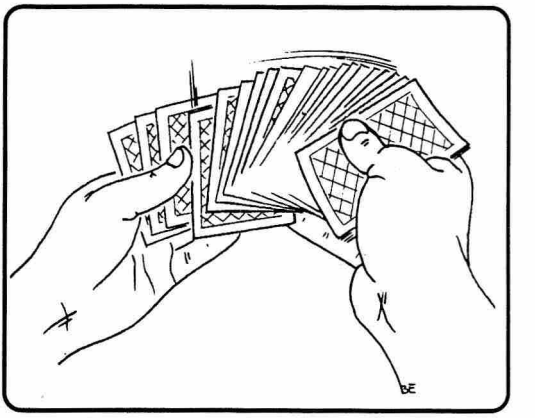
At that moment reverse the beveling motion by closing the hand somewhat. The thumb automatically pulls back the top card. During this, press the pad of the ring finger lightly against the right edge of the top card, which separates it from the rest of the deck for an eighth to a quarter of an inch at the right side. It is now a simple matter to take over this break with the pad of the little finger.

Check Points

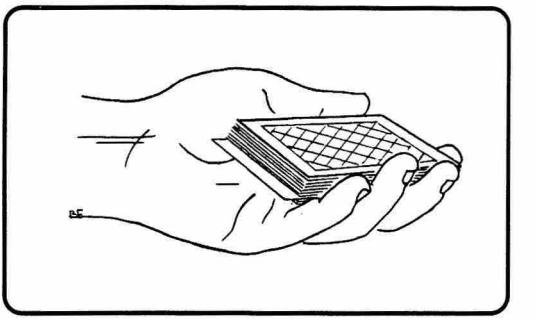
1. The beveling action and subsequent squaring occur smoothly and without interruption, forming a harmonious whole that must feel natural. The motion is barely visible. It can be completely masked by a casual gesture of both hands or through a covering or misdirecting activity of the right hand.
2. Take care that the break is not visible at the front of the deck, and also that the top card remains perfectly flat. As noted earlier, a break under the top card can often be spotted in the hands of even advanced cardmen from a yard away if the inner right corner is bowed up like a ski-jump.

Forming a Little-finger Break Under Multiple Cards

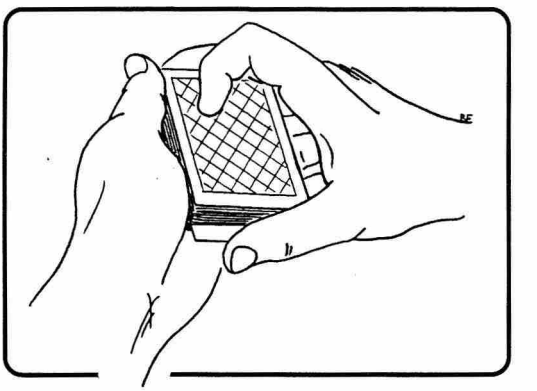
Let's assume that you need to hold a break above the bottom three cards of the deck (see, for example, the effect "The Spectator Cuts the Aces" on page 51). Spread the deck between the hands until the bottom few cards can be counted by sight. Place the pads of the right ring and little fingers on the face of the fourth card from the bottom, at its exposed right side, and pull this card inward for a quarter to half an inch, so that it projects from the back of the spread. (As the converse of an outjog, a card in this position is said to be *injogged.*)

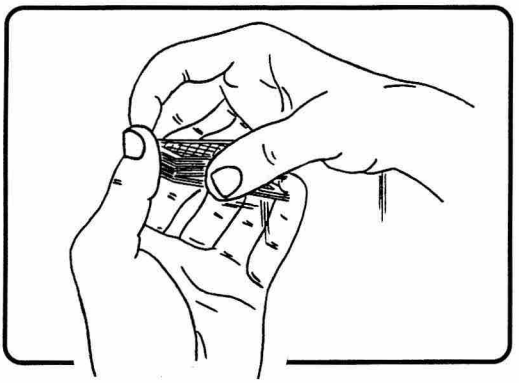


Push the cards together in the left hand. The deck is again in dealing position, but with the fourth card from the bottom projecting slightly from the back. For the sake of clarity, this situation has been exaggerated in the illustration. If the card doesn't project clearly from the back of the deck, use the wrist to give the deck a light shake against the left index finger.



Bring the right hand over the deck and take the cards into end grip, squaring them and lifting the pack to the left fingertips. In doing this, place the pad of the right thumb against the back edge of the injogged card.





With a light upward pressure, push this card flush as the deck is raised to the left fingertips. This creates a break that is taken by the left little finger as soon as the deck reaches the fingertips. In this position, the cards can be openly squared and the front of the deck gently riffled with the tip of the right middle finger. Lower the deck back into standard dealing position. The small action necessary to form the break is masked by the larger squaring action.

Check Point

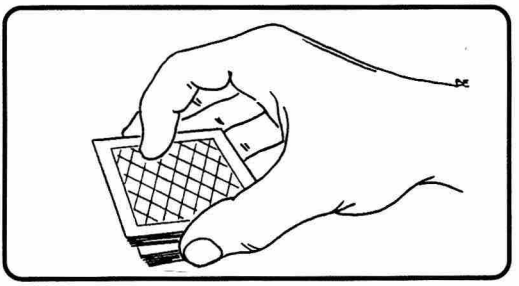
Carefully study the action of squaring the deck at the fingertips while holding a break. This action can be introduced anytime a little-finger break is being held.

NOTE: You can use this handling to take a break at any place in the deck, or when you spread the cards face up and desire a break above or below a selection.

The Thumb Break

The thumb can directly form a break by lifting slightly at the back end of the deck, while permitting the flesh of the thumb pad to be gently caught between the halves.

In principle, the thumb break is most often used as a transfer technique, in which a break being held by the left little finger is taken over by the right thumb. This provides more freedom of motion and permits an apparently casual handling of the deck.



Hold the deck in dealing position in the left hand, the little finger holding a break near center. With the right hand, take the deck into end grip. In so doing, press the pad of the thumb against the gap between the packets at the inner end of the deck. Remove the left hand from the deck. The right hand now possesses the deck in end grip with the thumb holding the break.

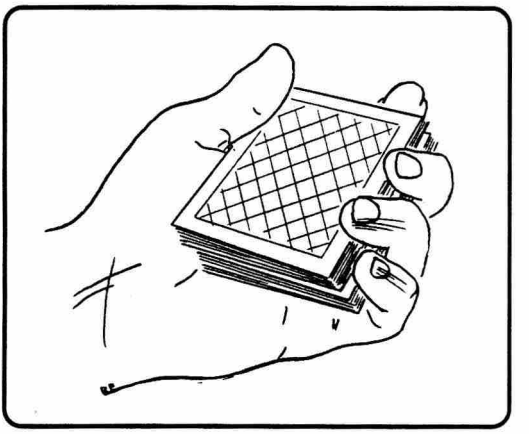
Check Points

1. Light pressure from the curled right index finger on top of the deck minimizes the space between the packets.
2. Note that the deck can be held in either open or covered end grip. If you are surrounded by spectators, use the covered end grip and turn slightly to the left, to prevent the gap at the inner left side of the deck from being seen.
3. Additional cover can be achieved by beveling the deck to the right, as in the illustration.

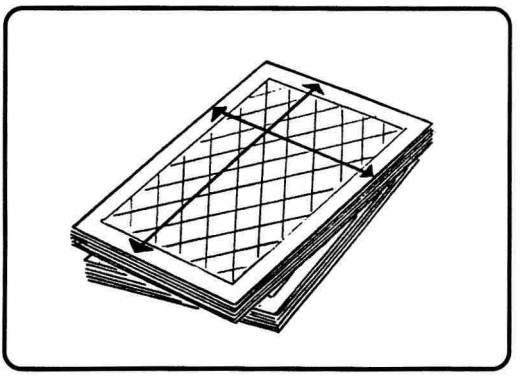
The Step

In many cases the step plays the same role as a break or an injogged card, which is to say it marks a specific location in the deck. The step can be formed directly from a break and the deck placed on the table.

Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position, with a little-finger break caught near the center. Take the deck into right-hand end grip. This hand will mask the formation of the step. Bend in the outer phalanges of the left middle, ring and little fingers, forcing the inner right corner of the upper packet to the left, where it falls on the lower packet. This collapses the break, after which the left fingers take up their accustomed positions at the right side of the deck. This configuration of the deck is termed a *step*.



The deck is controlled by the right thumb and middle finger. The heads of the arrows show the points at which the edges of the deck are aligned. This is where the thumb and middle fingers of both hands exert control over the deck. These two lines are the only ones along which pressure from the fingers will not destroy the step. The deck can be set down on a table, spread, even cut into multiple packets, without disturbing the step, as long as the deck is handled only at the alignment points. Starting with a step, a break can be reëstablished at any time.

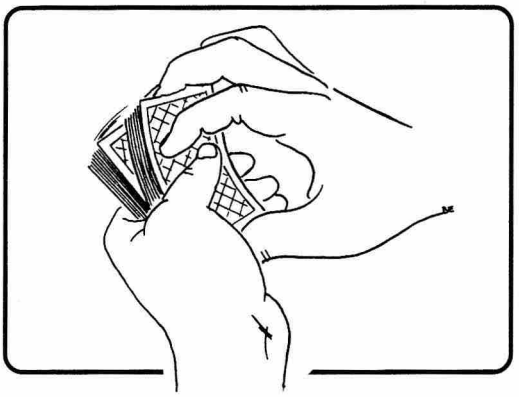


Check Points

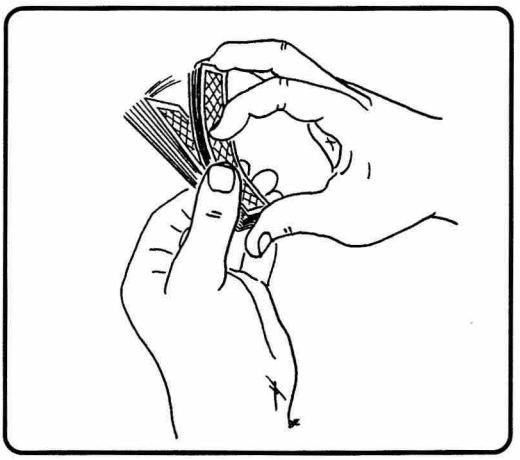
1. The step should not run parallel to the edges of the deck, but at a slight angle as shown in the illustration. The angle makes it possible to handle the deck by the ends and sides, as discussed above.
2. The step can also be formed by the left hand alone, as you stand with this hand hanging at your side, or as the right hand carries out a misdirecting action. But in most cases the right hand holds the deck in covered end grip to conceal the formation of the step at the front.
3. It is best to cover the formation of the step with a casual squaring motion, initiated by the left hand immediately after the step is formed. Obviously, the squaring is only simulated, the fingers gently sliding along the edges of the upper packet. The deck is lifted to the left fingertips as previously described, squared, then replaced in standard dealing position.

The Riffle

This is a flourish, and like all flourishes, it should be used sparingly and deliberately. I emphasize this here because the riffle can become a nervous tick, subconsciously repeated without realizing that it annoys the spectators. In such circumstances it communicates an impression of clumsiness. Yet, if introduced judiciously, it can underscore dramatic moments, providing an artistic highlight.



Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position with the left thumb stretched across the top near center. Now grasp the deck in right-hand end grip, pull upward with the right middle finger to bow the outer end of the deck up, and allow the cards to riffle off the pad of the finger. The resulting sound can be pronounced or soft, depending on how acutely the cards are bent.



The same effect can be achieved with a somewhat softer riffling sound by holding the deck in elevated dealing position. In fact, it looks more elegant in this position.

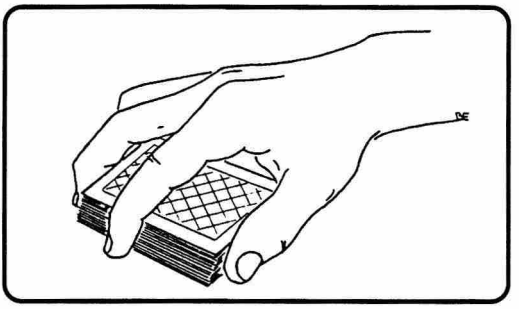
TIP: If a card is on the table and you riffle the deck about four inches behind the end of the card, the resulting gust of air will move the card. This action can be used to dramatize a moment when a magical event is perceived to happen. You can also employ the riffle prior to the revelation of a tranformation or use it to indicate that a card has invisibly left the deck and magically entered the card case on the table. Or you can hold the deck up to your ear and riffle it, claiming that the cards are telling you something. In any case, this adds a dynamic and audible element to your presentation, making it more interesting.

Riffling can also serve to convince spectators that the deck is squared. This is most useful when, for example, you are holding a break, perhaps with the little finger. Lift the deck to the fingertips and gently riffle the cards once.

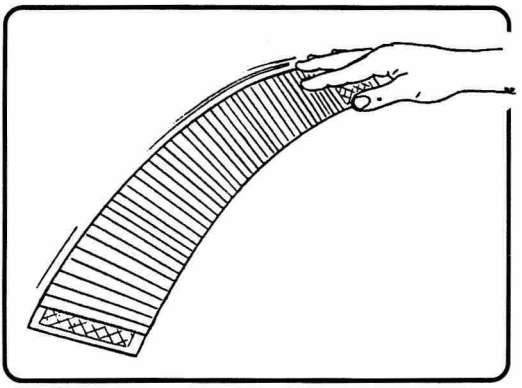
The Ribbon Spread

This technique is a flourish too, but from the outset it will be used often to spread the cards on the table, which is why it is included here as a basic technique. You will be astonished at the incredibly strong impact this gesture with the cards has on laymen. Somehow the technique appears much more difficult than it is. Knowing it has such an impact, use it sparingly, acknowledging that you are accomplishing something extraordinary.

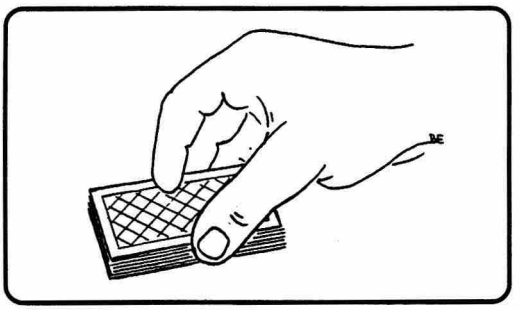
Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position; then take it into right hand end grip and place it on the table without releasing the right fingers' grasp. Move the index finger to the left side of the deck.

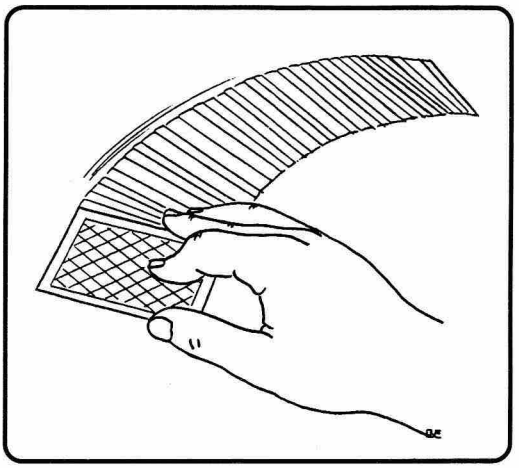


Sweep the right hand from left to right, using the fingertips to guide the deck with a light but definite pressure, so that the cards escape singly and each card is exposed. The thumb and middle finger act as guideposts. The index finger is progressively extended during the spread, so that the cards slide under the pad of this finger and end up in a controlled arrangement as a *ribbon spread* on the table.



Here is a variation: Again hold the deck in left-hand dealing position. Then take the deck into the right hand from above by the *sides*, as shown in the illustration, and place it on the table.





Spread the deck in a ribbon from upper right to lower left. This creates an asymmetrical picture, which is æsthetically pleasing.

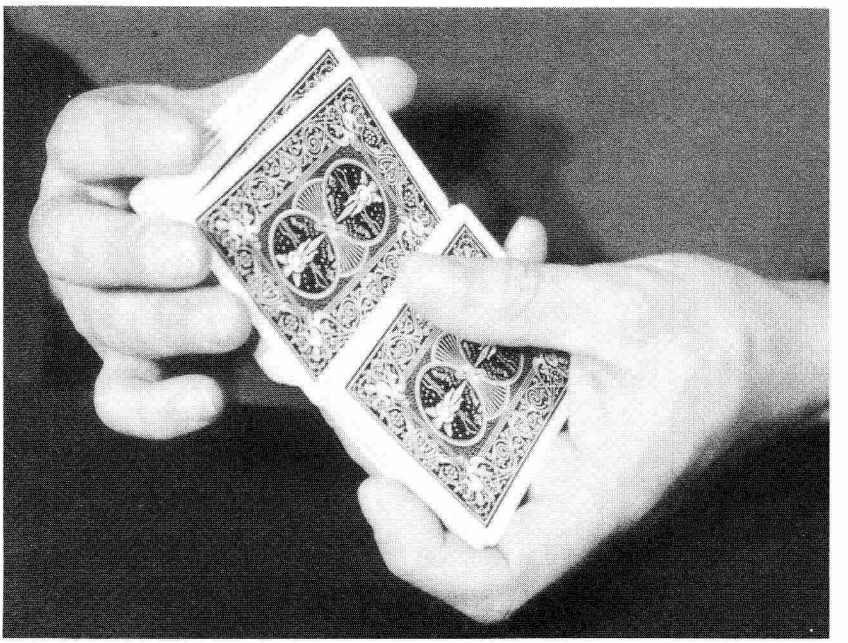
Check Points

1. This technique is best performed on a covered surface. On a smooth surface it may be necessary for the left thumb and middle finger to hold the lowest cards in position as the right hand spreads the deck. If this is not done, the bottom card will not cling to the slick surface. In such cases it may also be necessary to apply heavier pressure with the right hand.
2. The ribbon spread first described should form a gentle curve. This is more attractive than a straight line from left to right.

CHAPTER 2

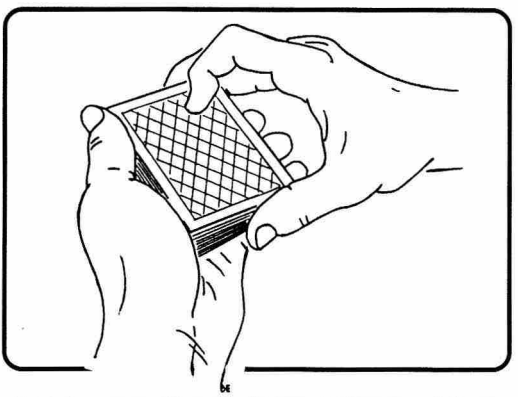
OVERHAND SHUFFLE TECHNIQUES, PART 1

"Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it.
Boldness has genius, power and magic in it."

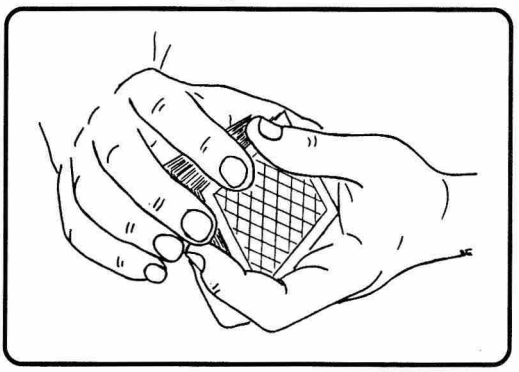


Overhand shuffling is a basic tool of card conjuring. Even if you have been performing the overhand shuffle since you first learned to play cards, you will soon recognize that the method described here employs a technique that feels somewhat different. The grip will probably seem a bit unconventional, and you may wonder why this retraining is necessary, since your present overhand shuffle technique is more than adequate to mix the cards. But if you take into consideration advanced overhand shuffle techniques, you will realize that the basic method taught here is a prerequisite for successful execution of all subsequent overhand shuffle techniques. I hope this brief explanation will motivate you to abandon your old shuffling habits.

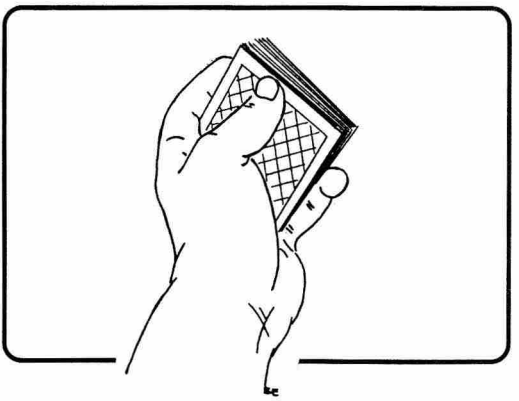
The Overhand Shuffle



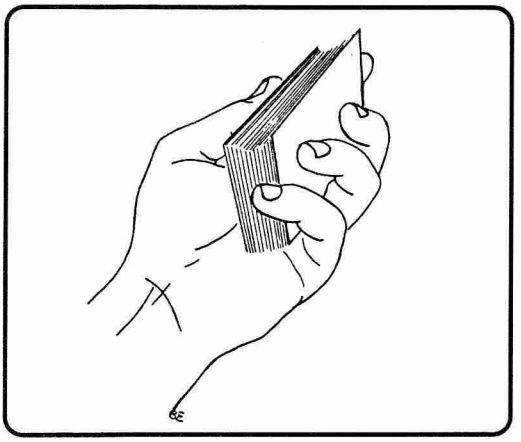
Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position, then grasp it in right-hand end grip with the right thumb and second finger near the inner and outer right corners. At the same time, move the left index finger from the outer end, curling it beneath the deck.



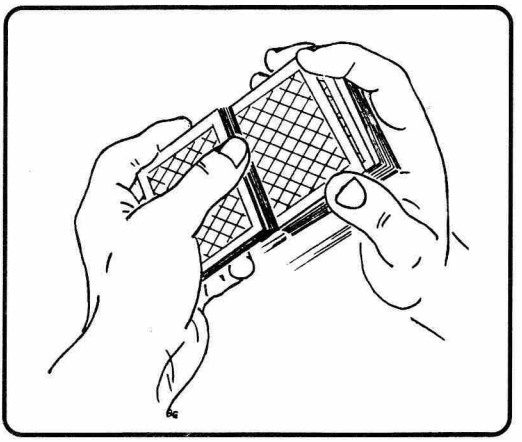
Bring the deck to a vertical position with the right hand, using the left side of the deck as a pivot point. Actually, the deck is not perpendicular to the horizon, but at an angle of about fifty degrees. It is held lightly between the right thumb and middle finger. The right index finger rests on the raised right side of the slightly beveled pack, the bevel forming naturally when the cards are held loosely. The ring and little fingers lie next to the middle finger. The illustration shows a view from the front.



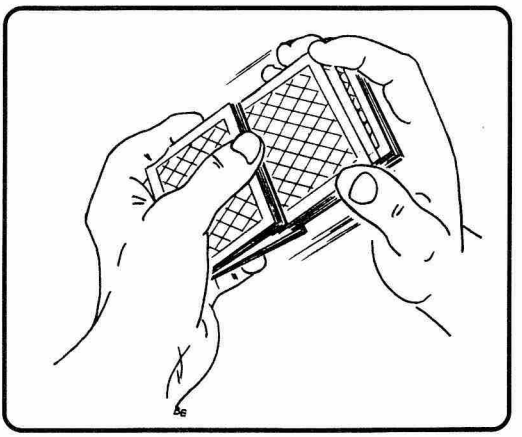
The left hand's grip is very important and is shown here in two views. It is important that the pad of the index finger rests on the outer end of the deck. The index finger's outer phalanx will contact the edge of the outer end of the top card, the exact point of contact depending on the anatomy of your hand.



The outer phalanx of the little finger extends for about half its length beyond the lower inner end of the deck. The ring and middle fingers lie relaxed against the bottom of the deck. The tips of the index, middle, ring and little fingers contact the upper half of the pack, at roughly the same level. The thumb lies along the upper right side of the deck.



The right hand now begins the actual shuffle, lifting the deck as the left thumb holds back the top few cards, *shuffling them off*, to use the technical term. This action will be called *the shuffle action* in the following descriptions.



Bring the right hand's cards over the packet just shuffled off. With the left thumb, pull a comparable number of cards (about ten) off the right-hand portion (called the *stock*) onto the cards in the left hand as your right hand lifts the remainder of the deck. This procedure is repeated until the right hand's stock is exhausted, which generally takes five to seven shuffle actions.

The shuffling off is a combination of letting cards drop from the right hand and pulling them off with the left thumb. The drop from the right hand is accomplished by relaxing pressure between the right thumb and middle finger.

A single overhand shuffle of the deck, as just described, will be designated *a shuffle* in the following descriptions.

Check Points

1. More likely than not, most readers will already have mastered a version of the overhand shuffle before reading the above description. This can lead to an "all thumbs" feeling; for in analyzing an action that is already familiar, often you will find that nothing works anymore! Probably you can retain most of your present handling. But pay strict attention to the positions of the left index and little fingers. They will provide the actual control over the cards. These fingers play a decisive role when cards project from the outer and inner ends of the deck.

2. Pay attention to the rhythm of the shuffle. As a general rule, try to make no more than six or seven shuffle actions in the course of a shuffle. That is neither too long nor too short, and is accepted by the audience as natural. There are, however, situations in which it is necessary to exceed this limit. In such cases, the longer shuffle may be justified with some comment pertinent to the trick; for example: *"When I ask some people to shuffle the cards, they are very thorough about it and shuffle like this. Of course, this isn't really necessary. You can shuffle like this just as well."* Another approach to disguising an extended shuffle is to interrupt it as you make some remark and gesture with your right hand and its cards; then resume the shuffle. Other strategies can be derived from the particular circumstances of the trick being performed.

3. The shuffle actions should not be jerky, but harmonious, symmetrical and "round". By "round" I mean that the right hand does not move up and down in a straight line, but describes a gentle arc.

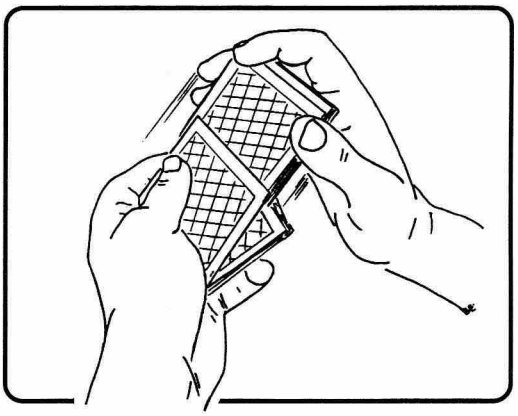
4. In principle, the right hand is the only hand that moves in the overhand shuffle—the left hand appears motionless to the observer. In fact, the left hand acts as a "shock absorber", preventing brusque motions.

5. Very important: Be generous in your movements. Hold both elbows away from your body and keep the deck at least eight inches from your chest. Do not use your chest as a "safety board" to catch cards that slip inward during the shuffle. Control the cards entirely with your hands. Always exaggerate this posture as you practice, gradually approaching a more normal position. All overhand shuffle techniques will take place at roughly the height of the solar plexus, whether you're standing or seated.

6. Rather than looking at the cards as you shuffle, converse with your audience.

Running Single Cards

Many tricks require a specific number of cards to be shuffled off one at a time. This will most often be at the beginning or end of a shuffle. Whatever the case, the situation must always be under your control. You must be able to shuffle off a single card, or several cards, one after the other. In so doing, the shuffle movements of the right hand and the sound produced by the shuffle must conform to the movements and sound of the normal shuffle.



Using the previously described technique, shuffle off about half the deck. Continue shuffling without interruption, but use the left thumb to draw off only a single card. To accomplish this, the thumb shifts from the upper edge of the deck to the back of the top card. A light pressure results in shuffling off exactly one card. Repeat this procedure with a few more cards, (an action known as *running the cards*). Then shuffle off the rest of the deck normally.

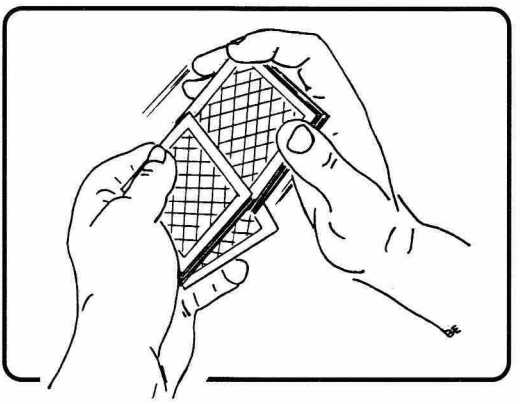
Check Points

1. Don't use an old deck for this technique. Worn or dirty cards often stick together, making it difficult to run single cards with precision. If the cards do bind, try holding the deck at a steeper angle. This will often overcome the difficulty.
2. Try running single cards at the start, then continue with a normal shuffle, repeating the single-card run with a few cards in the center of the deck; continue with a normal shuffle, then finally run the last few cards singly. This is a good practice sequence, which will allow the technique to be mastered quickly.

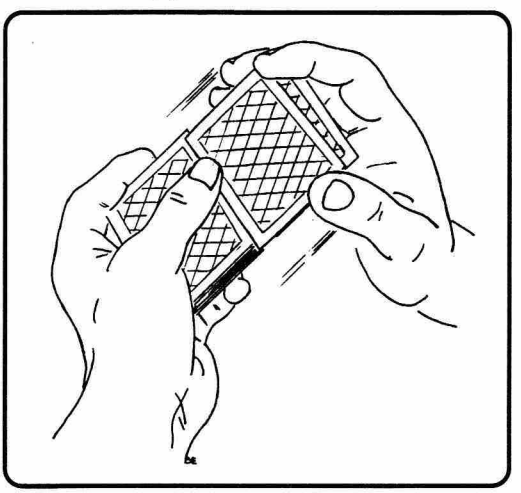
Control of the Top and Bottom Cards

Control of the Top Card

To control the top card, two shuffles are needed. Begin the overhand shuffle by running the top card, then shuffling off the rest of the deck.

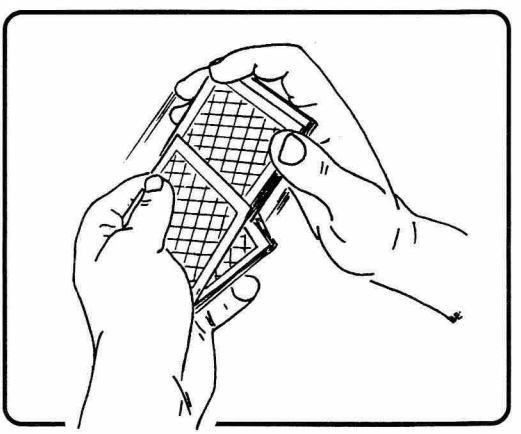


Overhand shuffle once again, but run the last few cards singly, assuring that the bottom card will be shuffled off by itself, bringing it to the top again.



Control of the Bottom Card

Begin the shuffle normally, as previously described, but in contrast to the usual procedure, the left middle and ring fingers press against the face of the bottom card, thus retaining it in the left hand. This is covered automatically by the first packet to be shuffled onto it in the initial shuffling action.

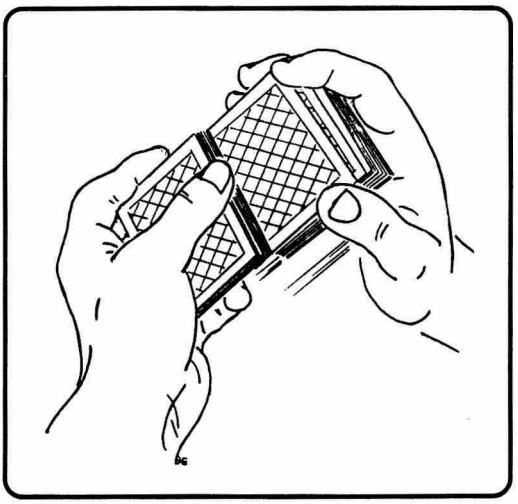


Check Points

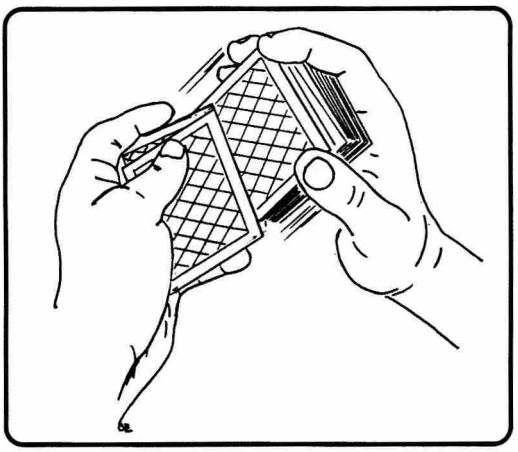
1. Normally it does not matter if more than one card is retained by the pressure of the left middle and ring fingers. However in some tricks, it is important that only one card be held back.
2. If difficulties arise, try holding the deck at a steeper angle, as previously advised.

Controlling the Top Stock of the Deck—The Injog Shuffle

The purpose of this technique is to retain the position and order of the upper portion of the deck. This requires two shuffles.

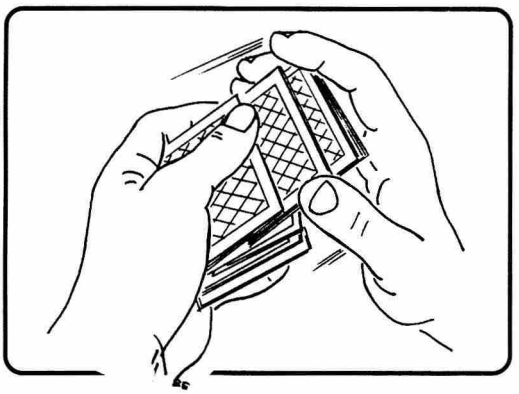


Let's assume that the four Aces are the top stock; that is, the cards we wish to retain on top. Begin the overhand shuffle by using the left thumb to draw off a block of four or more cards from the top (the exact number is irrelevant, so long as it includes the desired cards).

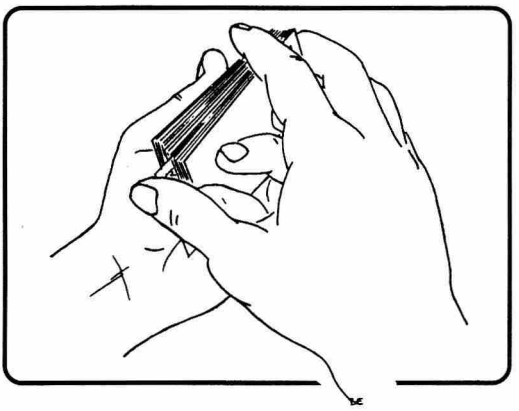


In the next shuffle action, pull off a single card, so that it protrudes about a quarter of an inch from the inner end of the shuffled-off stock. The resulting configuration is called an *injog*. The protruding card is an *injogged card* and often one speaks of *forming an injog*. In this special case, the injog could also be formed by a small packet of cards.

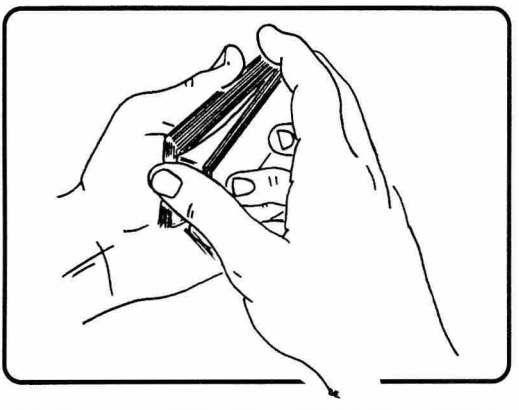
Shuffle off the rest of the deck. The injogged card projects from the back of the unsquared deck, and the left little finger acts as an antenna, sensing and controlling the injogged card. The following shuffle will bring the Ace packet back to the top of the deck:



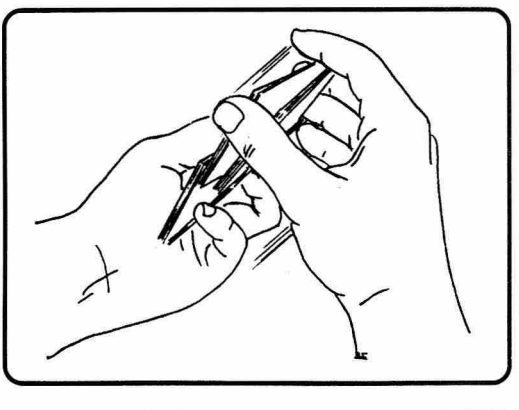
With the right hand, grasp the deck in preparation for the second shuffle. In doing so, press your right thumb against the injogged card at the inner edge and near the raised right corner.



With this thumb, push the injogged card slightly to the left and simultaneously into the deck. This combination of actions results in a diagonal motion that forms a thumb break between the Ace packet and the rest of the deck.



Shuffle off to the break and throw the Ace packet onto the left hand's packet as the final phase of the shuffle, bringing the Aces back to the top.



Check Points

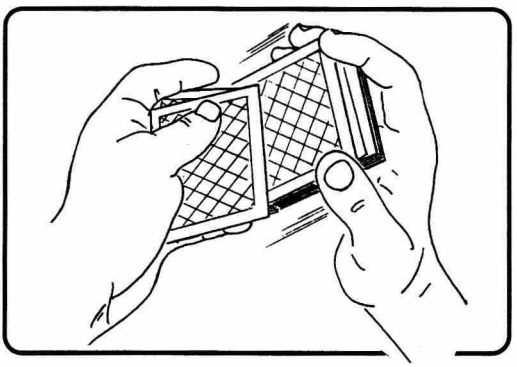
1. To control the first block of cards drawn off in a surer manner, place the pad of the left thumb on the upper right edge of the deck and pull the block down and away. This is seen clearly in the first illustration.
2. In shuffling off the injogged card, the right hand's packet moves in exactly the same path as in the previous and subsequent shuffle actions. In other words, it is not necessary to move the packet inward, then outward again to form the injog. The injogged card is positioned rearward through an inward action of the left thumb. Perhaps you will want to move the right hand's packet slightly inward; this is acceptable at the beginning, if it gives you more self-confidence, but decrease the motion as you progress, until it vanishes completely. Bear in mind that in an ordinary overhand shuffle the right hand consistently follows the same path.
3. Now you will understand the importance attached to the position of the left little finger. It detects the injogged card and facilitates in forming the break.
4. When forming the break under the injogged card, note that, in conformance with the hand's anatomy, the thumb moves diagonally to the left. Push slightly to the left with the left little finger to help the right thumb obtain the break quickly and securely. The injogged card buckles somewhat as it is pushed into the deck, gently forcing the packets apart. This allows you to form the break with confidence.
5. As you begin to practice, first make an exaggerated injog of half an inch, and note how much larger the resulting break is. This is acceptable initially. Ultimately, however, an injog of no more than a quarter of an inch should be formed, with the break normally being about an eighth of an inch wide.
6. You may think at first that the whole world will see the injogged card. That will not be the case once you have truly mastered the technique. To mask the injog even better, the card blocks shuffled off onto the jog can be shuffled inward as well. This results in a somewhat uneven looking deck, but the unsquared cards do not interfere with the process of forming the break.
7. In some circumstances you may wish to avoid the second shuffle and simply cut all the cards below the injog directly to the top with a single cutting action. To do this, proceed as follows: As soon as you finish the injog shuffle, grasp all the cards below the injog between your thumb, at the inner end, and middle finger, at the outer end. To do so, bend the right thumb's outer phalanx in slightly, so that the nail, the part of the thumb that offers the least friction, slides across the face of the injogged card. As soon as the cards are held firmly, lift them and throw them on top of the left hand's cards. The is called *undercutting* the deck at the injog. I don't consider this handling superior to the one originally described; but it is supplied as an acceptable alternative handling.
8. Instead of undercutting the deck immediately after the first shuffle, you may wish to create a time delay by letting the deck slide into left-hand dealing position while you make a gesture with your right hand. Then simply cut all the cards, including the injogged one, to the table and drop the balance on top.

Controlling the Bottom Stock

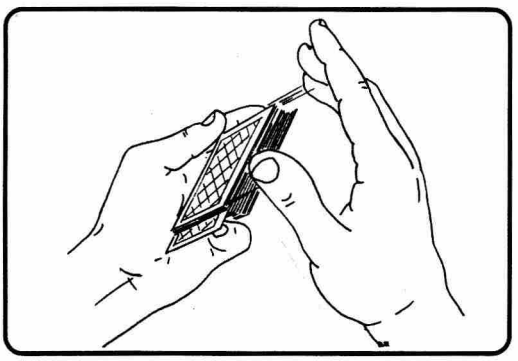
The purpose of this technique is to retain the order and position of the cards on the bottom of the deck. Once again, two shuffles are required, but the formation of the break at the injogged card differs somewhat.

Let's assume that the four Aces are to be retained at the bottom of the deck. Begin an overhand shuffle and shuffle off until you have just the Aces and a few other cards in the right hand.

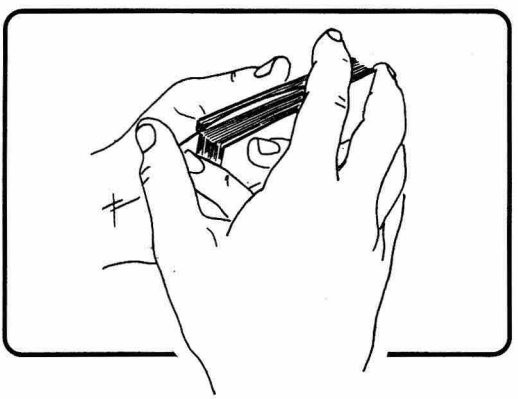
Injog a single card using the same technique described in the previous section.

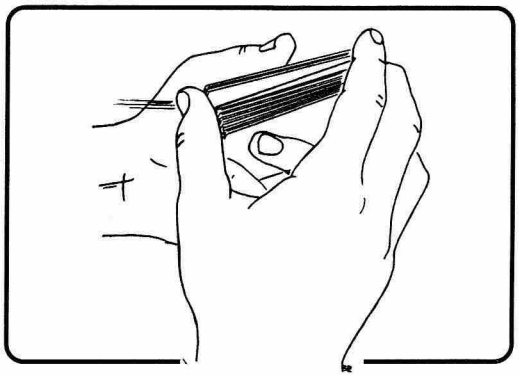


Throw the right hand's remaining stock on top of the cards in the left hand.

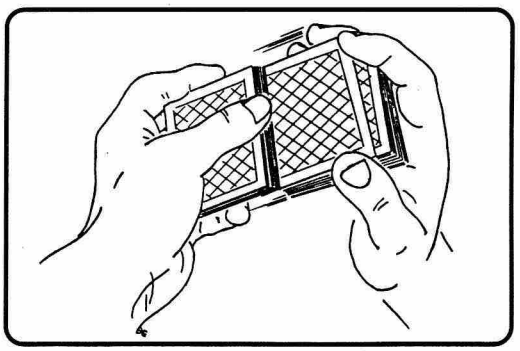


Now form a break *over* (not under) the injogged card. To do this, place the right thumb on the inner end of the injogged card near the raised right corner. In contrast to the previous technique (in which the break is taken under the injogged card), place the thumb against the edge of the card.





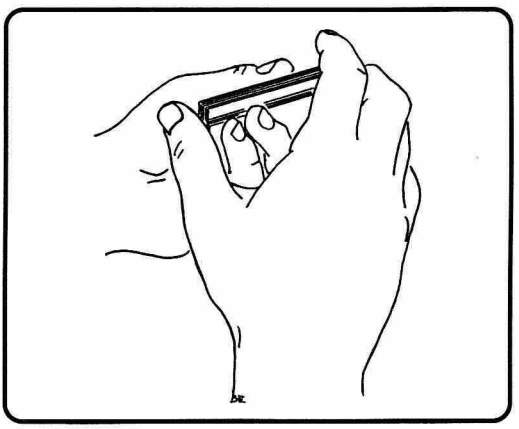
With the right thumb, push the card into the deck. In doing so, push outward with the thumb and simultaneously pull to the right. This creates a diagonal force toward the outer right. As the injogged card moves flush with the deck, the right thumb catches a break above it. Here too the slight buckling of the injogged card facilitates forming the break between packets.



Immediately begin the second shuffle sequence. In the first shuffle action the left thumb pulls off all the cards above the break. Shuffle off the rest of the deck onto these, leaving the four Aces in their original order on the bottom of the deck.

This method is well suited for controlling even a large bottom stock. Once it is mastered, the shuffle can be used—as can the top stock control—to retain the order of more than half the deck.

When it is necessary to retain only a few of the bottom cards, for example the four Aces or a royal flush, the following technique may be used. It has the advantage of using only a single shuffle and is similar to the technique for controlling the bottom card.



Begin the overhand shuffle with the pad of the left ring finger extending beyond the lower right edge of the deck. This allows the ring finger to hold back a small packet from the bottom of the deck in the first shuffle action. The right hand in effect strips out the center portion of the deck in this initial action. Depending on the length of your fingers, the little finger may be repositioned as shown in the illustration. Finish by shuffling off the rest of the cards. Thus, the bottom cards of the deck have been retained there.

TRICKS WITH THE OVERHAND SHUFFLE

Thought Stealer

This is my interpretation of a fine trick from Hugard and Braue's classic treatise, *The Royal Road to Card Magic.*[1] It is based on the work of American magician Arthur Finley, who was the first to experiment with the spelling of mentally selected cards.

Effect

The spectator thinks of a card in the deck. The deck is then shuffled and given back to the spectator. Without anyone revealing the identity of the card, the spectator mentally spells the name of the card, placing one card on the table for each letter spelled. The last card dealt is the selected one!

Preparation

For this minor miracle you must remove six cards from the deck and place them face down on top in the following order: Two of Clubs (ten), Six of Spades (eleven), Five of Hearts (twelve), Seven of Spades (thirteen), Four of Diamonds (fourteen), Queen of Diamonds (fifteen). The Two of Clubs is now the top card of the deck. The numbers in parentheses correspond to the number of letters in the name of the card. As you'll have noticed, each card has one more letter than the card before it. This fact, combined with a few false shuffles, is the secret of the trick. (Later I will reveal how this wonderful effect may be performed at any time with a borrowed and unarranged deck.)

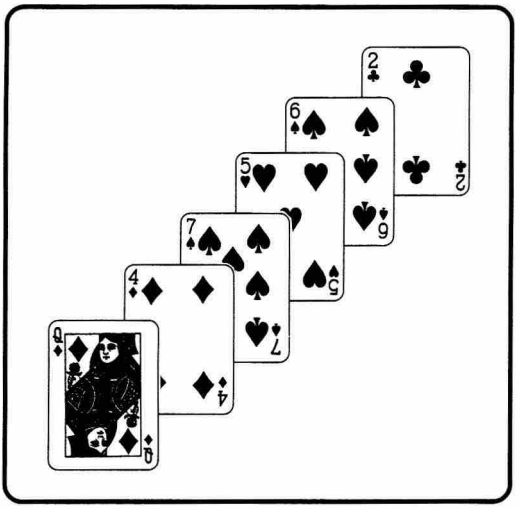
Construction, Management and Script

"I have discovered that several curious telepathic experiments may be conducted with playing cards. Don't worry, I won't reveal your most intimate thoughts—those will remain our secret. But I would like to try an experiment in divining a neutral thought."

During this introduction, give the deck a false overhand shuffle, retaining the position and order of the top six cards (Controlling the Top Stock of the Deck—The Injog Shuffle, page 44). Follow this with this next shuffle sequence: Pull approximately half the cards from the top of the deck into the left hand, injog the next card and shuffle off the rest.

Allow the deck to settle into dealing position. The injogged card marks the location of the pre-arranged stock. Square the deck at the fingertips and form a break under the injogged card with the right thumb (see the Little-finger Break Under Multiple Cards technique, page 31); then transfer the break to the left little finger. Hold the deck in dealing position.

"Would you please just think of any card." Before the spectator can do this, you continue, *"But in the interest of time, simply think of one of these cards from the center of the deck."* Cut off all the cards above the break and set them aside on the table. Now deal the left hand's cards one at a time, face up onto the table (Dealing Cards Face Up—Stud Method, page 26). Deal the cards in a diagonally overlapping row, from outer right to lower left, exposing both index corners.



First deal four cards, hesitating as though this were sufficient; then deal another, hesitate and finally deal a sixth card. Replace the tabled half on top of the left hand's stock. Do not count the cards aloud. It should look as though the number of cards plays absolutely no role. The accompanying script could be something like this: *"Think of any one of these cards; it doesn't matter how many we have—perhaps another one—it makes no difference—think of any one of these."*

The initial shuffle, the subsequent cutting of the deck and the dealing of cards from the center give the strong impression that the spectator really could have thought of any card. In fact, however, the choice is restricted to the six cards you already know and whose pre-arrangement automatically assures your success.

"I'll turn away, so that I can get no hint from the direction of your gaze about which card you'll think of." Turning your head away physically communicates the fact that you do not wish to influence the spectator's choice. Some readers may think that this statement exposes the principle of watching the gaze to your audience, but you are, in fact, simply eliminating a method that will normally occur to any intelligent person.

Once the spectator has mentally chosen a card, turn back, gather the cards and place them face down on top of the deck. In doing so, leave the order of the cards unchanged.

You now once more employ the Top Stock Control—Injog Shuffle: Begin an overhand shuffle by pulling off the top half in a block; then run nine cards on top of this, injog the next card and shuffle off the rest of the deck. Form a break under the injogged card and shuffle off to it, throwing the rest of the deck on top. This places nine cards above the pre-arranged stock on top of the deck—the Two of Clubs being tenth from the top, and each of the next five cards corresponding in position to the number of letters in its name.

During the shuffle you explain, *"I will now try to divine the card in your thoughts."* Look the spectator in the eyes and ask him or her (this is more entertaining with a spectator of the opposite sex) to concentrate on the mentally selected card. You then claim, *"Of course, I know the card in your mind, and to prove it to you I will place the card you are merely thinking of at its ideal position in the deck."* By now the shuffling is over. Snap your right fingers over the deck and exclaim with a finely feigned concentration, *"It is done."*

Gaze at the spectator. *"Your card is now at the only position in the deck corresponding exactly to the number of letters in its name."* This statement will confuse most of the spectators, so you immediately add, *"I'll show you what I mean."* Hand the deck to the spectator, who is instructed to deal one card face down from the top of the deck for each letter, spelling the name of the thought-of card. *"For instance, if you thought of the Ace of Diamonds, you would spell a-c-e o-f d-i-a-m-o-n-d-s, with one card for each letter. Don't forget the* of."

The card corresponding to the final letter should be retained face down in the spectator's hand. Be sure that the card is not revealed prematurely, and say to the spectator, *"Now, for the first time, tell everyone the card you freely thought of."* Your helper then turns the card over, and it really is the thought-of card—the pre-arrangement having done the work for you.

If at first you lack the necessary self-confidence to control the spectator's actions, you can deal the cards and finally display the chosen card yourself. But it is much more effective if the spectator does this. If you act with confidence and friendly authority, all but the most difficult of persons will do as you instruct.

Final Notes

1. I promised you an impromptu method that can be used with a borrowed deck. If you have a good memory, you need not pre-arrange the cards before performance. As you deliver the introductory monologue and divide your gaze between the cards and the spectator, simply remove the relevant cards (or others that spell with the same number of letters) and place them face up on the table. You must, however, act as though it doesn't matter which cards are used. (This, by the way, was the method originally suggested by Hugard and Braue.)
2. Note how the execution of each sleight is obscured by the script. Each shuffle should be performed casually and without emphasis.
3. Since nine cards makes for a rather long run, you may wish to consider running only five cards, then doing another shuffle to run the remaining four cards needed. Or simply run five and interrupt the action of the shuffle momentarily as you make some comment and gesture; then resume the shuffle, running the last four cards.

The Spectator Cuts the Aces

There are countless variations of this effect in the literature of magic. The plot was originally suggested by the American magician Bob Veeser. The method explained here has the advantage of being very easy. It was first published by the respected American card-master Larry Jennings.[2]

Effect

The spectator cuts a shuffled deck into four roughly equal packets and the top card of each packet turns out to be an Ace!

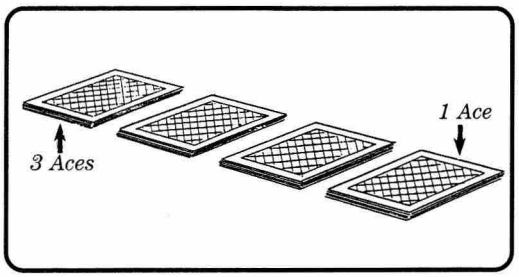
The deck is thoroughly shuffled at the outset and the spectator cuts the deck freely.

Preparation

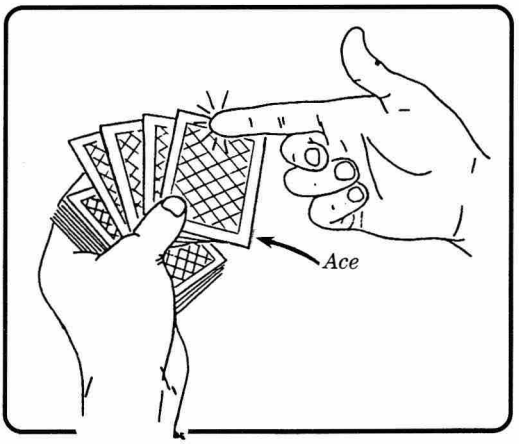
Secretly position the four Aces on top of the deck. Naturally, should subsequent tricks require some other four of a kind, those four cards can be used in place of the Aces.

Construction, Management and Script

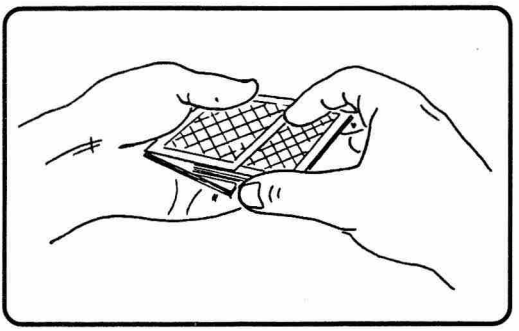
Give the deck an overhand shuffle, keeping the Aces on top (Controlling the Top Stock of the Deck—The Injog Shuffle, page 44). Without pausing, run the top three Aces and throw the balance of the deck on top of them. Then set the deck face down on the table.



During the shuffles, explain to someone that you wish the deck cut into four roughly equal packets. The spectator then does so. Be sure that the packets are cut from left to right from your perspective; thus, three Aces are at the bottom of the left-hand packet while the fourth Ace is on top of the right-hand packet.

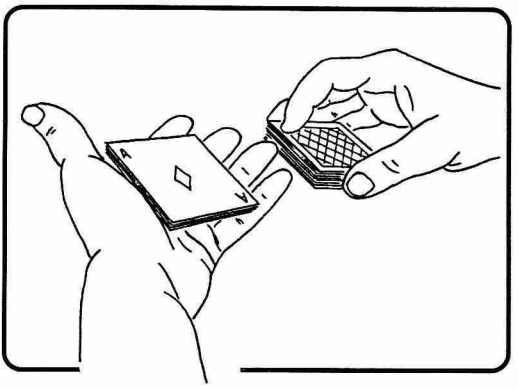


Pick up the left-hand packet and spread it briefly between your hands. *"You cut four packets. You could have cut them anywhere, correct?"* Take a left little-finger break over the bottom three cards as the packet is squared (Little-finger Break Under Multiple Cards, page 31). Openly outjog the top card somewhat. Then take the top card from the tabled pile on your left and place it onto the outjogged card, but jogged a bit to the right. Repeat this with the top card of the center pile, then the top card of the pile on the right (an Ace), forming a four-card spread.

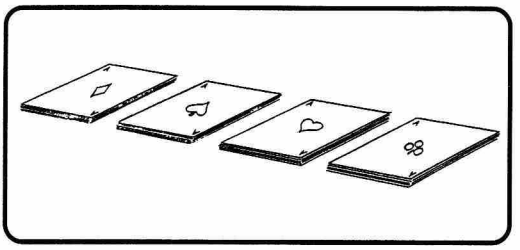


"These are the cards you have cut to." The left thumb holds the spread of four cards on top of the packet as the right hand takes them in end grip, squaring them up. Look at the spectator as you say, *"Let's take a look at the first card you cut to."* As you say this, the only other sleight in the trick is executed: The four cards in the right hand are squared and placed flush onto the left's packet as the right hand grasps the entire packet in end grip. The left thumb immediately pulls the top card to the left, while the left fingers simultaneously draw the three cards under the break to the left as well.

As these cards are drawn away, use the left side of the packet to flip the top card of the left hand's four sidewise and face up onto the three below it. The card is seen to be an Ace.



With the left thumb, hold the Ace firmly in place for a moment as the right hand replaces its packet alongside the other three on the table. Let the Ace just revealed fall face up onto this packet. Then slowly turn the other three Aces over one by one, placing each face up on a tabled packet. Conclude by congratulating the spectator for having cut to the Aces without your assistance!



CHAPTER 3

FALSE CUT TECHNIQUES, PART 1

"History should not burden memory, but liberate the mind."

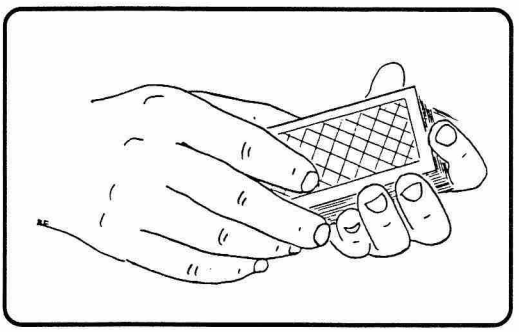
G. E. Lessing

False cuts should always be used after a partial or complete false shuffle. Cutting the deck to conclude the shuffling phase is standard procedure in both amateur and professional card-play. If you shuffle without cutting the deck or without having a spectator cut it, the audience will be left with an uneasy feeling of something left undone. Remember the proverb: "Trust in God, but cut the cards." This chapter examines simple false cut techniques, most of which begin with the deck in the hands, but end with it on the table. These are particularly well suited for use after an overhand shuffle.

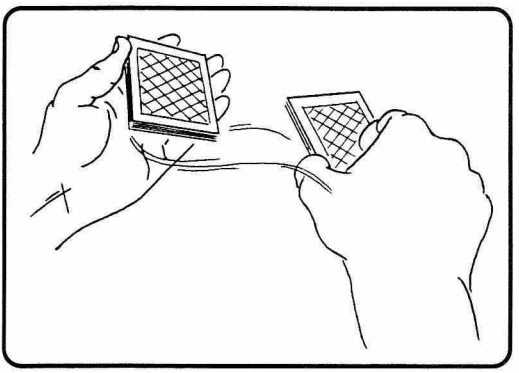
It is best after a false cut to proceed immediately with the handling, rather than give the spectators time to think about the cutting procedure. It is also important in any false cut technique not to draw attention to the cut. If you need to or want to mention it, do so in passing, but do so without undue stress—don't "wake sleeping dogs".

An Optical False Cut from the Hand

Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position. Grasp it by the sides in the right hand as in the illustration (shown from the front) and raise it to elevated dealing position. Pay particular attention to the position of the right index finger. Holding the cards at the fingertips, look at the deck.



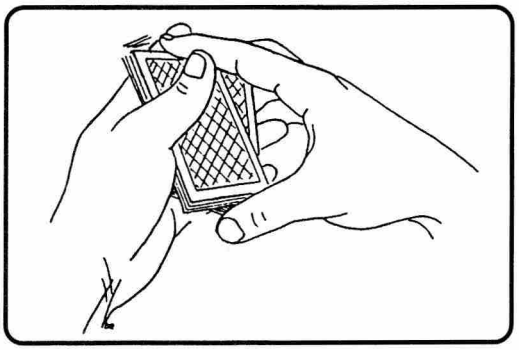
Now look at the audience while you cut the deck as follows: With the right hand, sweep the lower portion of the deck back—drawing it inward for about half its length—then move it to the right and carry it forward, placing it on the table.



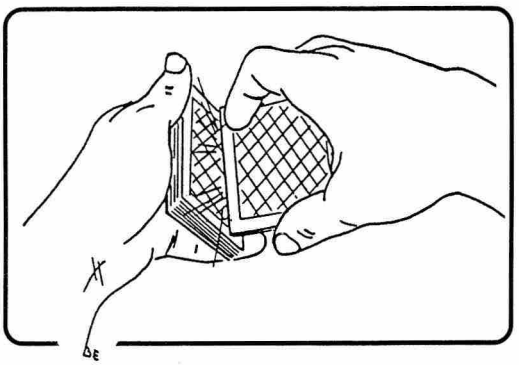
It is important that both packets remain squared and that no cards project from the back of the left hand's packet. Pressure from the thumb and middle finger of each hand keep the cards square. Drag the tip of the right index finger over the back of the top card of the deck as the right hand pulls the lower portion back. The fingertip first glides inward on the back of the top card, then moves to the right, tracing an L-shape as the cut is made. This refinement (suggested by the Canadian magician and puzzle master, Mel Stover) adds significantly to the deceptiveness of the cut for those spectators watching the deck.[3] The right fingertip finally settles firmly on the back of the lower packet as it moves to the right and forward.

Return the right hand smoothly to the left hand and take the remaining packet by its sides near the inner end. Then carry this packet forward and to the right, depositing it squarely onto the tabled packet. This simple but deceptive cut preserves the entire order of the deck.

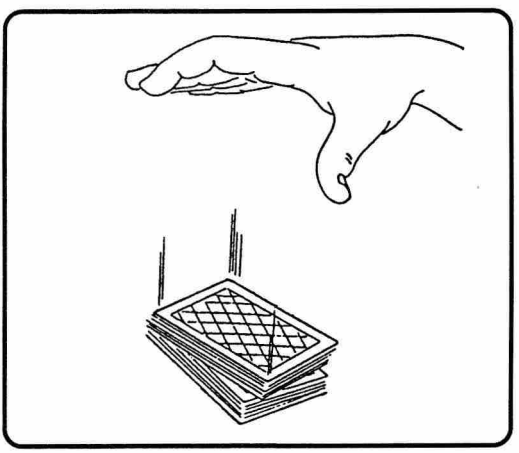
The False Swing Cut



Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position. Then grasp it in right-hand end grip and begin a swing cut (page 27).



Carry out the cutting action, separating the packets. In this action, rotate the left hand at the wrist, turning it thumb upward and bringing its packet to a vertical position. Tap the left side of the right hand's packet against the top of the left hand's packet in a squaring action.

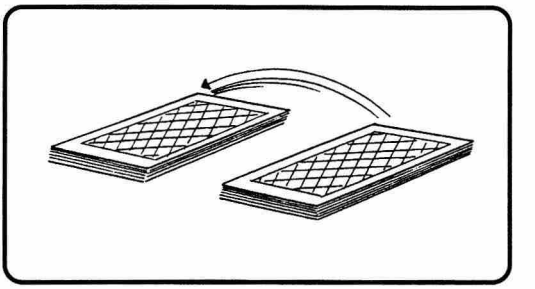


Drop the right hand's packet on the table, then take the left hand's packet in right-hand end grip and drop it onto the tabled packet. Let the unsquared status of the deck register. Then neatly square the tabled deck with both hands. (Refer ahead to page 107 for the preferred manner of doing this.) This extremely deceptive false cut is now completed and the deck is back in its original order.

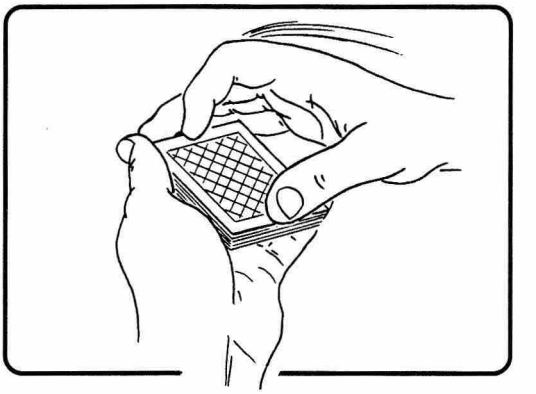
A Simple False Cut

Although this false cut is again very simple, performed smoothly and with the requisite self-confidence, it is quite deceptive.

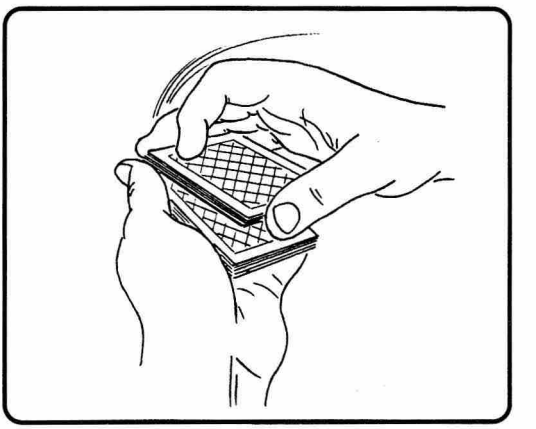
The deck is face down on the table with one end toward the performer. With your right hand, cut about half the cards from the top and table them to the left.



Bring the right hand back to the right and pick up the original bottom half of the deck in end grip, placing it in left-hand dealing position. The cutting procedure is now interrupted for a moment, under the pretext of moving something on the table (a pen, an ashtray, the card case, etc.) aside with the right hand.



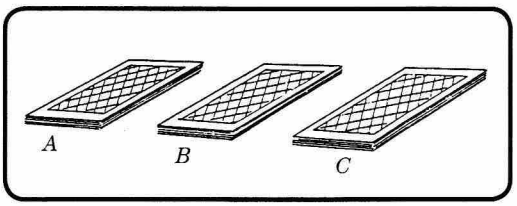
With your right hand, immediately take the remaining packet from the table and place it on top of the left hand's cards. This leaves the deck in its original order.



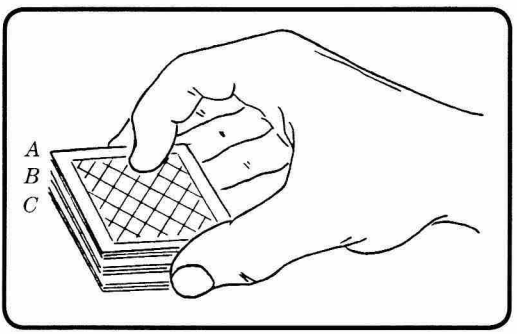
The same procedure may be easily adapted to a triple cut with three packets. In this case, you first cut off about two-thirds of the deck and deposit it to the left of the bottom third. In a continuing action you carry the top third again to the left and set it down. Return the right hand to the packet on the right and place it into the left hand. Interrupt the cut momentarily as you adjust something with the right hand. Then complete the cut by placing the right-hand tabled packet onto that in your left hand, followed by the remaining tabled packet.

A Triple False Cut

In this technique—similar to one described by Conradi-Horster in 1896[4]—the deck is cut into thirds. Although this is not in conformance with professional card-table procedure, it is extremely convincing. What more could you ask?



Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position, use your right hand to cut off the top third and table the packet at Position A. Cut off the next third and place it at Position B. Finally take the remaining third from the left hand and table it at Position C.



Take Packet A into right-hand end grip and place it onto Packet B, then place both onto Packet C. Place the deck into left-hand dealing position and square it with both hands.

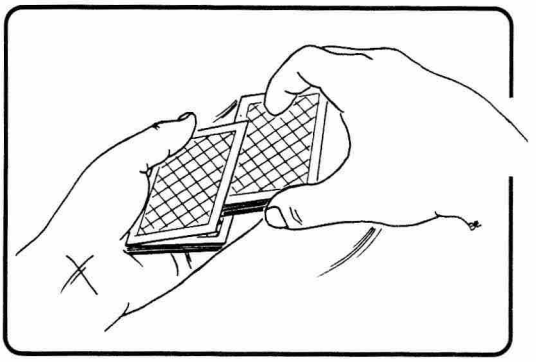
To change the dynamic of the procedure, you can use your right hand to slide Packet A over the edge of the table and into the waiting left hand. Immediately secure Packet A in right-hand end grip, remove it from the left hand and place it onto Packet B. Slide these combined packets back off the table and into the left hand, then set them onto Packet C and slide the entire deck back and into the left hand.

If you carry out the cutting and replacement of the cards smoothly and without hesitation, the sequence is surprisingly convincing and the validity of the cut will never be questioned.

The Slip Cut from Dealing Position

This technique doesn't maintain the order of the deck. Instead, it enables you to cut the deck from your hand to the table while keeping the top card on top.

Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position, with the left thumb lying naturally on top of the deck near the outer left corner. Bring the right hand over the deck to assume end-grip position. Begin the cut by lifting the top half of the deck roughly an eighth of an inch at the inner end with the right thumb. Then, with the right hand, cut these cards to the table in a continuous motion. However, with the left thumb, exert light but steady pressure with the inside of the outer phalanx on the top card, holding it back.



This card should fall imperceptibly flush with the lower half of the deck. Bring the right hand back to the left hand, take the rest of the deck in end grip and drop it onto the tabled half. The deck has apparently been given one complete cut.

Check Points

1. When this sleight is executed, the most common error seen is the position of the thumb, which should not lie across the width of the cards, but at its natural position at the outer left corner, as shown in the illustration.
2. You need only press lightly against the top card with the inside of the outer phalanx of the thumb. The card will be held back almost automatically.
3. The slip cut can be facilitated by turning the left hand slightly clockwise at the wrist and tilting the outer end of the deck up *just* enough to conceal the top card from the audience's view at the moment that card is slipped onto the lower packet. Warning: This twist must be imperceptible!
4. Look up at the spectators just before you perform the slip-cut action, drawing their gaze up and away from the deck and your hands at the moment the sleight is executed. Then look down at the packet remaining in your left hand, refocusing attention on the cards, as you complete the cut.
5. The slip cut is also frequently used to lose or reposition the top card of the deck while otherwise retaining the order of the cards. To do this, make the slip-cut action as taught above, but instead of placing the right hand's portion on the table, complete the cut by replacing it on top of the left hand's cards. For this handling, you should tilt the outer end of the deck down a bit, fully exposing the back of the top card and obscuring the front end of the deck as the cut is executed.

TRICKS WITH FALSE CUTS

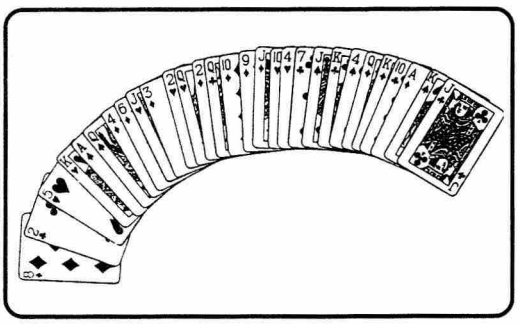
Hat Trick

Effect

A spectator shuffles the deck. The magician then places three prediction cards face up on the table and cuts the deck three times—cutting to the only three cards that match the prediction cards in both color and value.

Construction, Management and Script

The spectator shuffles the deck and returns it to you. Ribbon spread the cards face up on the table, so that you can see every card.

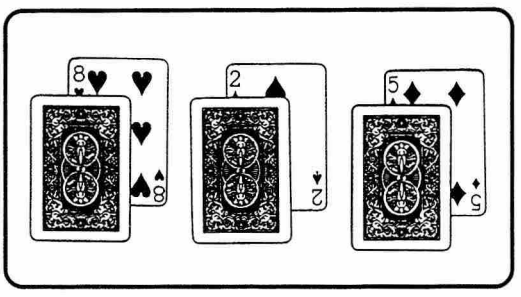


While spreading the deck, note the top card (for example, the Eight of Diamonds) out of the corner of your eye. The spectators should not be aware that you have done this. Remove the mate of the top card (the Eight of Hearts) from the spread and place it on the table, face up and to the left. Repeat this with the mates of the second and third cards from the top (say the Two of Clubs and Five of Hearts).

Gather the spread and hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position. Execute the optical false cut from the hand (page 56), then replace the deck in left-hand dealing position and deal the top card face down onto the Eight of Hearts: *"You shuffled the deck. Now I'm going to cut it randomly and place the card cut to down here."*

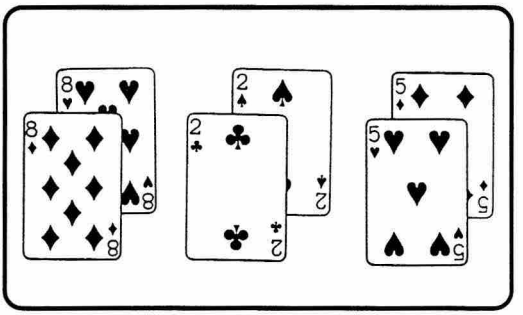
Next, execute the false swing cut (page 58). Replace the deck in left-hand dealing position and deal the top card face down onto the second card (the Two of Spades).

Finally give the deck a third cut, this time using the triple false cut (page 60). Deal the top card onto the third face-up tabled card (the Five of Diamonds).



You have apparently cut the deck three times and placed each card cut to on one of the prediction cards. Summarize: *"First I removed three cards from the deck that you had thoroughly shuffled. Then I cut the deck several times. The cards I randomly cut to were set aside. These cards could be any three cards from the deck."* To emphasize this, ribbon spread the deck face up.

"Each card has a mate in the deck, a card having the same color and value." Turn the three face-down cards face up one at a time, placing them so that they overlap the corresponding prediction card as shown in the illustration. *"I am happy to report that in some magical and mysterious way, I have managed to cut to the three mates."* This concludes a simple but very effective trick.



Court Card Conclave

This methodologically simple, but astonishing and extremely deceptive trick is the creation of the American magician, Nick Trost, who constantly surprises his colleagues with direct effects using simple methods.[5]

Effect

The deck is again shuffled by a spectator. The performer removes the twelve court cards and displays their random order, after which he cuts them into the deck. They are then caused to rise magically to the top in matching pairs.

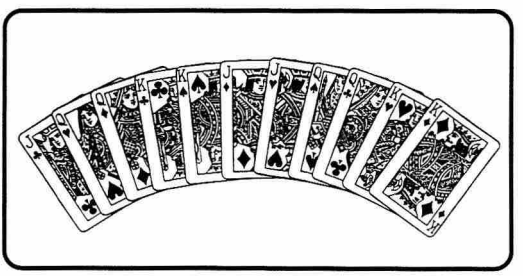
Construction, Management and Script

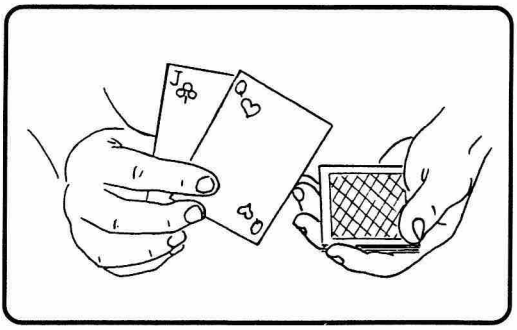
Take the shuffled deck from the spectator and spread it with the faces toward yourself. Cut the deck at the first court card you come to, bringing that card (for example, the Jack of Spades) to the back of the face-up deck. Remove the other eleven court cards from the deck and place them face up in a packet on the table.

No one will notice that only eleven court cards are removed. You don't mention the number of cards, referring to them only as the court cards. In any case, there are very few spectators who know that the deck contains twelve court cards.

Table the deck face down and pick up the court cards, which you spread face up between your hands without letting the spectators see the faces: *"I'm going to rearrange the order of the cards, so that no two of the same value or color lie together."*

As you say this, bring the mate of the top card of the deck (the Jack of Clubs, in our case) to the back of the packet. Arrange the rest of the cards in pairs of the same value and color, but make sure that no two cards of adjacent pairs match in color or value. The illustration shows one possible arrangement.

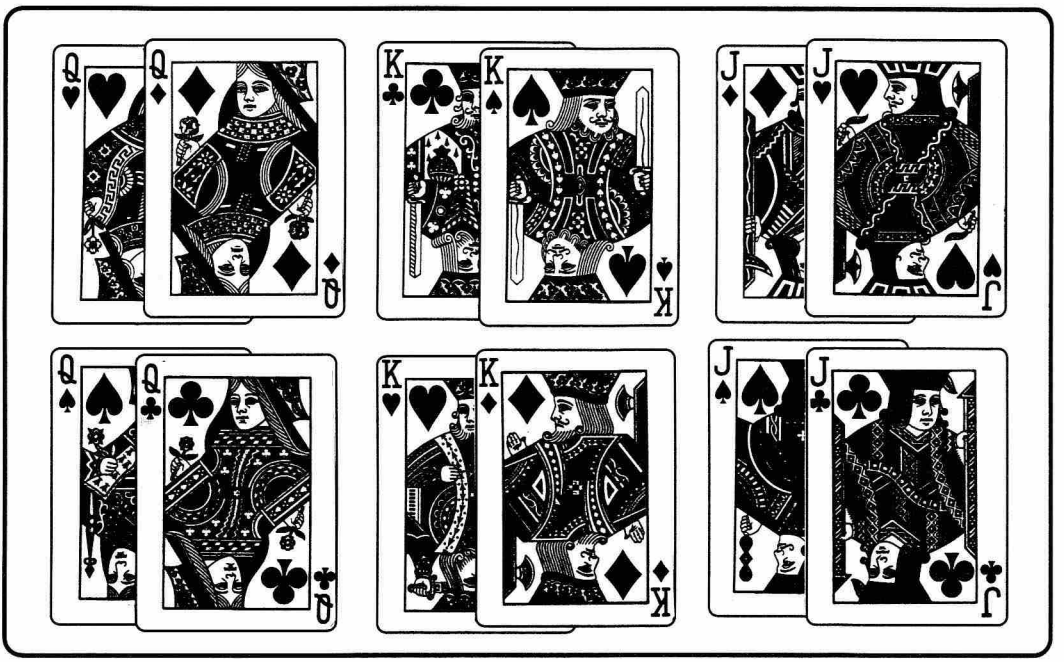




Turn the packet face down and hold it in left-hand dealing position. You will now display the cards in pairs, showing that none match in either value or color: Grasp the top two cards in the right hand without altering their order, and show them to the audience. Then place them face down under the packet. Repeat this procedure five times, showing a total of six pairs. You alone know that the Jack of Clubs has been shown twice.

Running face down from the top, the cards are now in mated pairs with the lone Jack of Clubs at the face of the packet. Place the packet onto the deck. This secretly unites the Jack of Clubs and the Jack of Spades, forming the final pair. Now begin to build up the effect, using a smoke-screen tactic. You explain, *"I will cut the deck, shake it and turn it over once. This brings the court cards from their original depths and causes them to chase chaotically after one another. Now, according to the law of calculatory reciprocal albuminosity, which I invented, they will ultimately come to the top. And not just to the top, but arranged in matching pairs!"* As you speak, give the deck a false cut, such as the optical false cut from the hand (page 56). Then take the deck face down into left-hand dealing position and shake it. Finally, place your left thumb under deck and flip it sidewise and face up in the left hand. Repeat this to bring the deck once more face down. Naturally the entire explanation is delivered in your most serious manner.

Prove your theory by turning the top two cards of the deck over as a pair and dropping them face up on the table. Repeat this with each of the remaining five pairs, which indeed are pairs of court card mates.

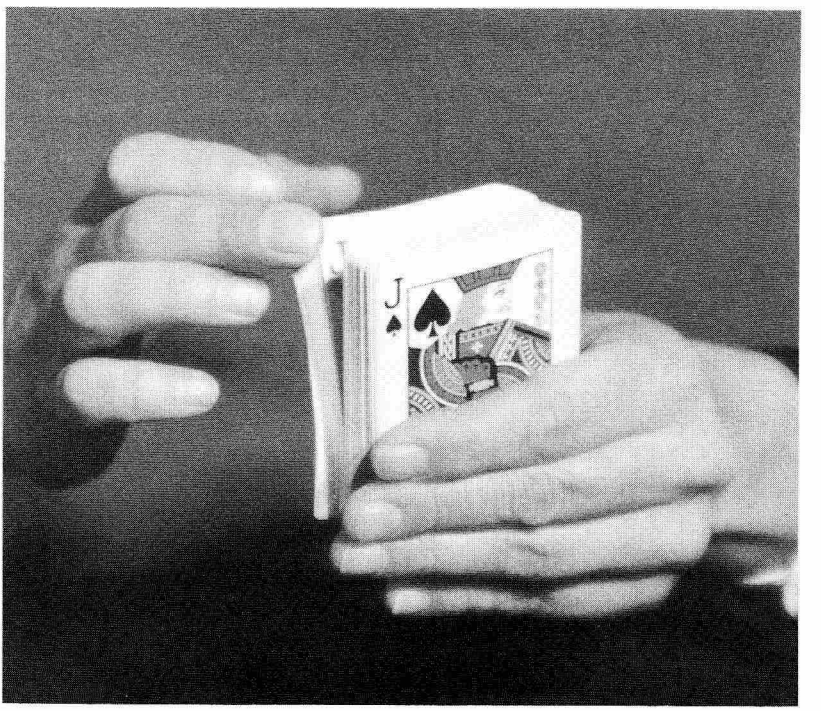


CHAPTER 4

CARD CONTROLS

"Not everyone can be a star, but all can strive to do their best and constantly improve."

Henk Vermeyden



Card controls are those techniques that secretly place one or more cards at a specific location in the deck. Most often a card is controlled to the top or bottom of the deck, but we will also encounter situations in which a card must be controlled to, say, fifth from the top. This chapter describes several direct techniques for accomplishing this. Additional methods will be described in forthcoming chapters of this course, in the context of the techniques under discussion there (for instance, the Hindu shuffle [Chapter 11] and the pass [Chapter 19, *Volume 2*]).

The Overhand Shuffle Control

You can do this control immediately, using the overhand shuffle techniques you have learned in Chapter 2. Since all the underlying steps have already been taught, the following is a concise description without illustrations.

The spectator removes a card from the deck and remembers it. Begin to give the deck an overhand shuffle, shuffling off about half the cards. Then extend the left hand with its half of the deck toward the spectator, with the request that the chosen card be replaced on top of the shuffled cards.

This done, continue the shuffle by running three cards onto the chosen card, injog the next card and shuffle off the rest of the deck. Direct your gaze at the deck as you run the first two cards, then look up at the audience. The spectators will see that the first few cards are fairly shuffled, upon which they will relax their attention on the shuffle.

Form a break under the injog, shuffle off to the break and throw the balance of the deck on top. You have just brought the spectator's card to fourth from the top.

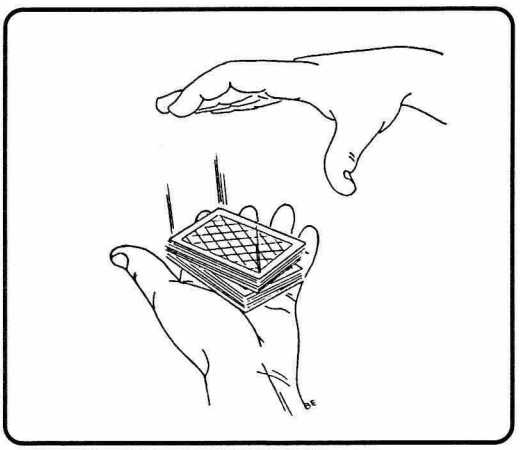
"I hope your card was not accidentally shuffled to the top or bottom of the deck," you remark, as you display the top three cards, replace them, then turn the deck face up and display the bottom cards. Turn the deck face down and begin another shuffle sequence, running off the top four cards, injogging the next and shuffling off the rest of the deck. Form a break under the injog, shuffle off all the cards above the break and throw the final four cards on top. The spectator's card is now on top of the deck.

Check Points

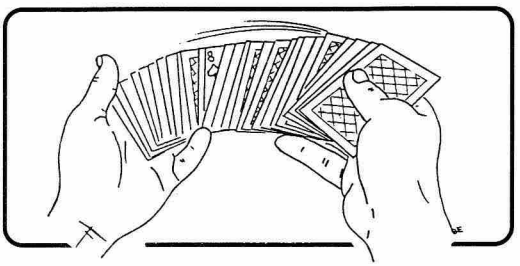
1. Make a point of not looking at the deck as you shuffle, looking instead at the spectators, with whom you are speaking. The shuffle should be regarded as a mere "formality" and is given no special emphasis.
2. To maintain consistency in the manner the card is selected and then returned to the deck, you may wish to have the card chosen by starting an overhand shuffle and asking a spectator to call stop. When he does so, hand him the top card of the left hand's packet.
3. It is sometimes necessary to position the selection at a specific number from the top, say seventh. To accomplish this, simply run six cards onto the selection instead of three, then injog the next. The second shuffle brings the card directly to seventh position from the top.
4. Once you have gained mastery of the injog shuffle you may wish to try injogging the first card you run. In doing this you can bring the selection directly to the top with the second shuffle. This, however, requires a small injog, a very smooth handling of the shuffle and good control of the audience's attention.

The "Whoops!" Control

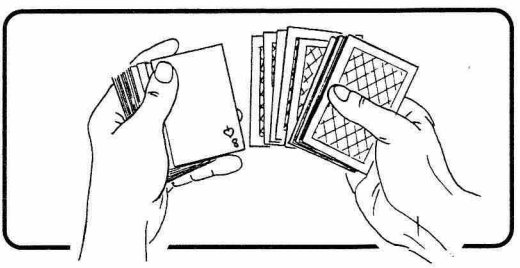
This is surely the easiest control in the chapter. It is based on an idea of American dealer and innovator U. F. Grant.[6] It is quite bold, but when properly executed there will be no suspicion that you are controlling a card.



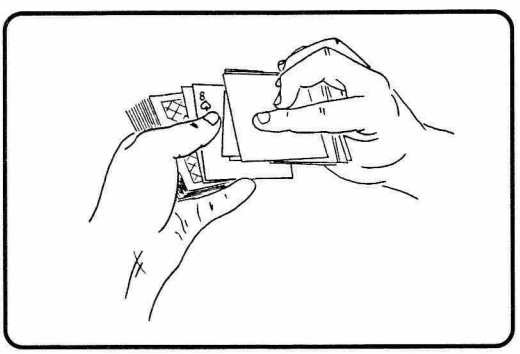
The bottom card of the face-down deck is secretly reversed there, face up. This is accomplished between tricks, or through one of the reversal techniques discussed in Chapter 24 (*Volume 2*). Dribble the cards into your left hand (page 24) and have a spectator choose one by calling *stop* during the dribble. As the spectators note the chosen card, replace the rest of the deck onto the dribbled portion and square the cards. Next swing cut the upper half of the deck into the left hand, have the spectator's card placed on top of this packet and drop the right hand's cards on top.



This places the reversed card over the selection. Overhand shuffle, keeping the center cards together. (This is easy. Simply drop about a quarter of the pack in a block as you near the center section.) Then spread the cards between your hands, saying, *"Your card is somewhere in the shuffled deck."* Suddenly the reversed card comes into view. *"Whoops! I must have turned a card over during the shuffle. I hope that isn't yours?"*

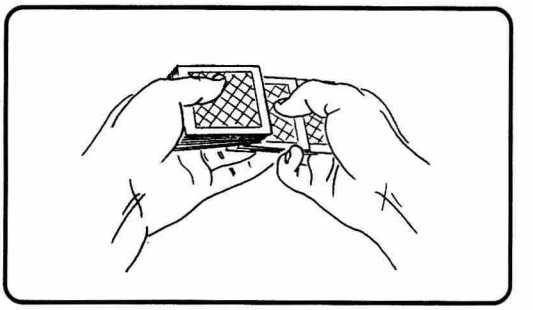


Whatever the spectator's response, divide the spread, so that the face-up card is on top of the left hand's portion, and hold the card in place with your left thumb.



Turn your right hand palm down as you push the face-up card slightly to the right with the left thumb. Then, with your right thumb, take the face-up card under the right hand's face-up packet.

Turn your right hand palm up again, place its cards under the left hand's cards and square the deck. The chosen card is now on top.



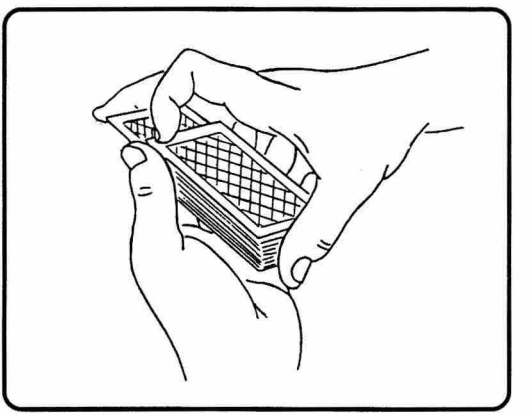
Check Points

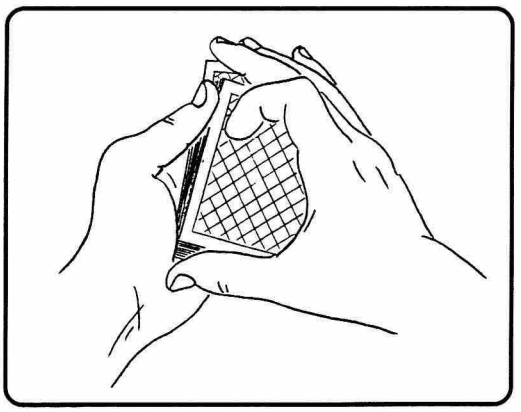
1. This control requires more acting ability than digital dexterity. Actually react as though you had accidentally turned over a card during the shuffle, something that surely has happened to you on occasion.
2. The method just described embodies the handling you would actually use to turn over a card reversed in the pack. Give no thought to controlling a card; just concentrate on straightening out an accidentally reversed card. This attitude makes this technique convincing.
3. You could also have turned the left hand palm down, pushing the reversed card onto the right packet with the left thumb. If doing so, it is a simple matter to push the card under the reversed card on the left packet over slightly, obtaining a glimpse of the index of the chosen card.

The Diagonal Insertion

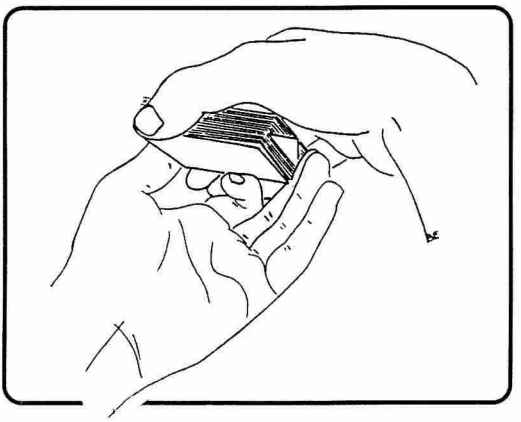
The card is apparently inserted into the front end of the deck and the cards are squared. Actually, the card is inserted at a slight angle and projects a fraction of an inch at the inner right corner, allowing you to take a break above or below it with the left little finger.

Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position. With your right hand, take back the chosen card and push it about halfway into the outer end of the deck. Then place the right hand over the deck and card as shown in the illustration, with the intention of pushing the card flush with the deck. At this point use the left thumb to adjust the deck to elevated dealing position, so that it is held at the fingertips by the left thumb and middle finger, with the bent left index finger giving support from below.

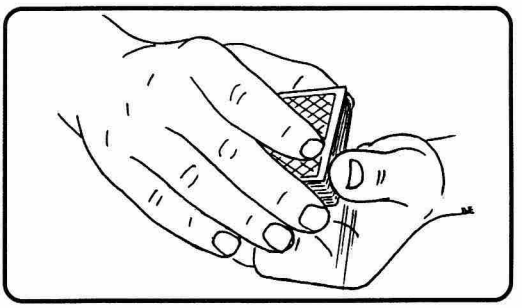




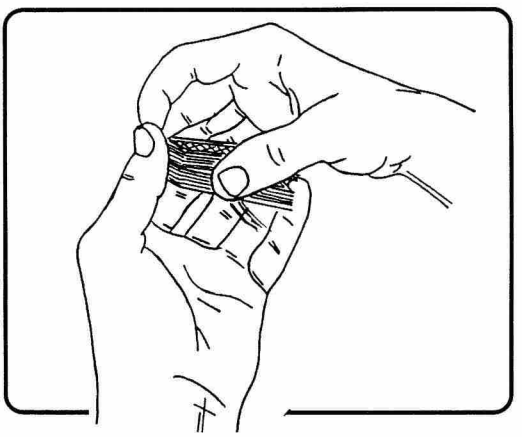
The right thumb and middle finger form a line of pressure. The right index finger lies on top of the deck, and the tip of the left thumb extends just beyond the outer left corner. With a single thrust, push the card into the deck with the middle finger. Although it appears to go straight in, the skewed pressure between the right thumb and middle finger press the left edge of the card against the left thumb, causing the card to enter the deck at a slight angle.



Press the card all the way into the deck. Because only the left thumb and middle finger hold the deck, the right edge of the card can project unhindered from the right side of the deck. The left ring and little fingers move almost imperceptibly to the right to make way for the card, as shown in this illustrated view from below.

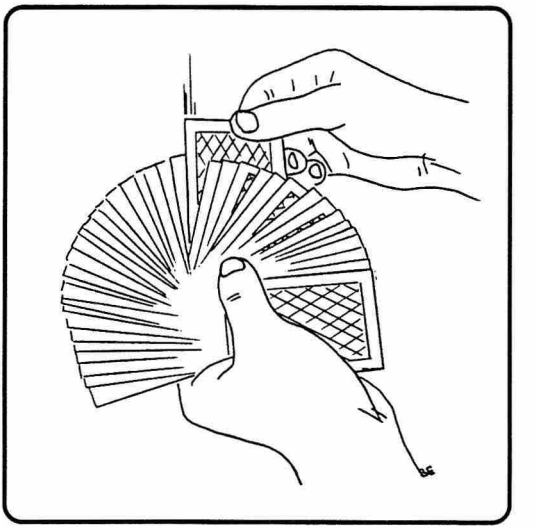


Immediately slide the left thumb over the outer left corner of the deck, then along the left side to the inner left corner and back again. The left middle, ring and little fingers slide along the lower right edge of the deck without disturbing the projecting card. Guide the deck with the right hand, which now holds the cards in end grip. You have apparently squared the deck.



Place the pads of the left middle, ring and little fingers on the right edge of the card and press it lightly down and into the deck. Then press the left little-finger pad into the break formed above the card. Square the deck at the fingertips and lower it to dealing position. The left little finger holds a break above the selected card. From this position you can apply one of the methods in this chapter to control the card to the top or bottom of the deck. For example, see the post-peek overhand shuffle control on page 74.

A variation: You can have the card chosen from a fan and replaced in it. (Instructions on making a fan are given in Chapter 12, page 179.) If the spectator inserts it too forcefully, pull it out again, so that it projects for about half its length from the fan. *"Did you show the card to the others? Please remember it!"* Briefly expose the faces of the fan and card to the spectators, then close the fan with the card still projecting from the front and continue as described above.

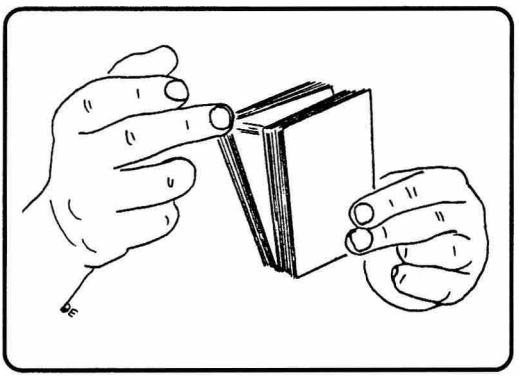


Check Points

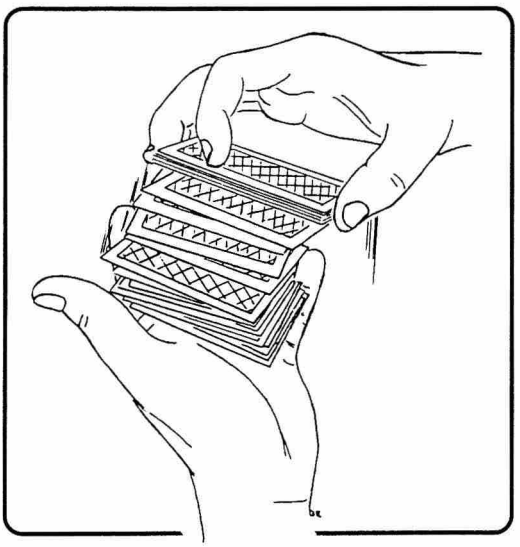
1. The spectator can insert the card into the deck. Riffle the front of the deck from bottom to top to allow the spectator to do so. Pressure from the left thumb on top of the deck prevents the card from going more than halfway in. Proceed as before with the diagonal insertion.
2. The outer left corner of the inserted card must not project from the left side of the deck. The left thumb, strategically placed exactly as described, prevents this.
3. Once the card projects halfway from the squared deck, a single thrust completes the insertion.
4. The insertion and the formation of the break take place in elevated dealing position. The bent left index finger supports the deck.
5. Here is an additional subtlety: When the card has been inserted diagonally into the deck you are controlling the cards solely through the pressure of the left thumb and middle finger. As soon as the card is fully inserted, riffle your right thumb lightly up the inner end of the deck. This does not disturb the position of the angled card. You can now transfer control of the deck to your right thumb and middle finger, then use the left thumb to riffle lightly down the side of the deck near its outer left corner. Only after this second riffle do you form the break, square the deck at the fingertips and eventually lower it into dealing position.

The Peek Control

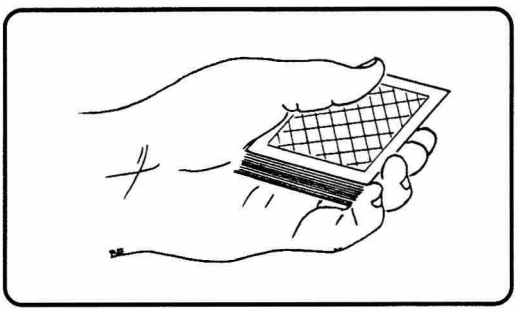
Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position. The outer right corner should be *slightly* beveled, as is always the case when the deck is held in dealing position. Here, the mild bevel aids in the forthcoming riffle of the cards, which should be smooth and neat.



Take the deck into right-hand end grip and move it outward to the right, so that you can grasp it vertically by the inner left corner, left thumb on top, left index and middle fingers on the bottom. Riffle the outer right corner of the pack from face to back with the right middle finger and stop near the center of the deck. *"I'm going to riffle through the cards like this and as I do I'd like you to call 'stop' at any time and note the card at that point."*

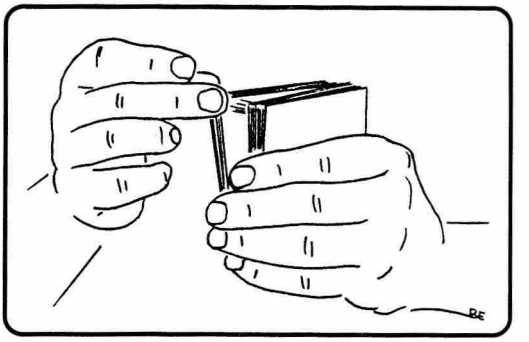


Having explained this, riffle through the rest of the cards. Then once again take the deck into right-hand end grip and dribble the cards into the left hand: *"Your card will then be somewhere in the center of the deck."* During this explanation, you have held the cards clearly and deliberately at the fingertips. The fairness of the explanation bears directly on the procedure that follows (a shrewd psychological touch suggested by Cy Endfield[7]).

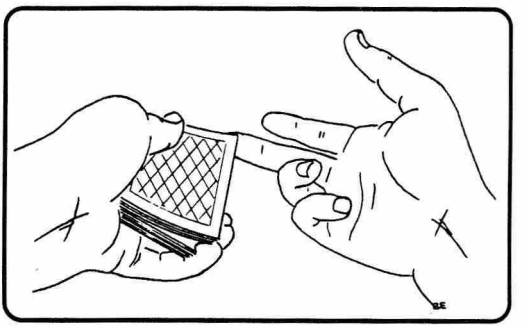


Square the deck and hold it face down in left-hand dealing position. With your left thumb, press the outer left corner against the base of the left index finger. Imagine a screw passing through the deck at this point. The other fingers lie close together along the right side of the deck. About half of the outer joint of the left little finger extends beyond the inner end of the deck.

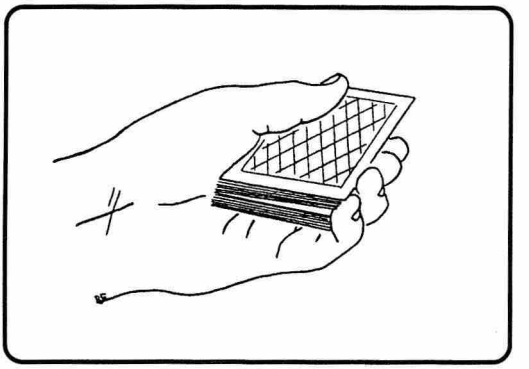
Raise the left hand and deck again to a vertical position and riffle the outer right corner with the right middle finger until the spectator tells you to stop. As you do this, turn your head away to avoid seeing the cards. The spectator notes the identity of the face card of the upper packet. To make this easier, you may need to open the deck a bit more. The illustration shows this from the spectator's viewpoint.



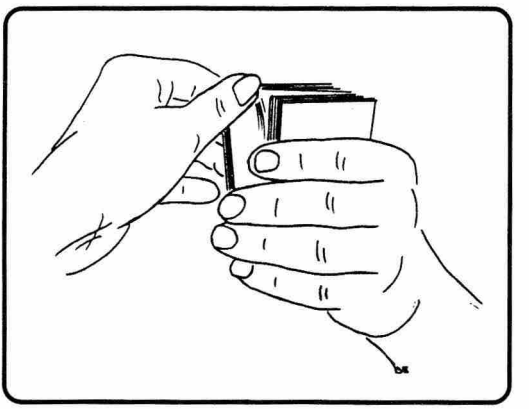
The cards are gripped by only the left thumb and the base of the index finger, causing the entire right side to open. You now press the outer joint of the left little finger more firmly against the right side of the deck. Note how this causes the pad of the left little finger to be squeezed over the top right edge of the lower packet.



Once the spectator acknowledges having noted the card, release the upper packet from the right middle finger. This almost automatically clamps the pad of the left little finger between the packets. If you want to take a break above the chosen card, let it riffle off the right middle finger before pressing the left little finger against the side of the deck and releasing the rest of the cards. With the left fingers close together and the little finger projecting slightly past the inner end of the deck, the break is concealed from all sides. Square the deck at the fingertips and face the spectators.



A variation: The spectator can open the deck to sight a card. In fact, this is how the peek was originally handled. Hold the deck as described above, clamped between the thumb and index finger. Show the spectator how to use his or her left thumb to open the deck at the outer left corner (spectator's perspective, as seen in the illustration) and note the card there. When your helper does so, press the deck lightly but securely against the spectator's thumb. This permits you to take a break with the pad of the left little finger when the spectator lets go.

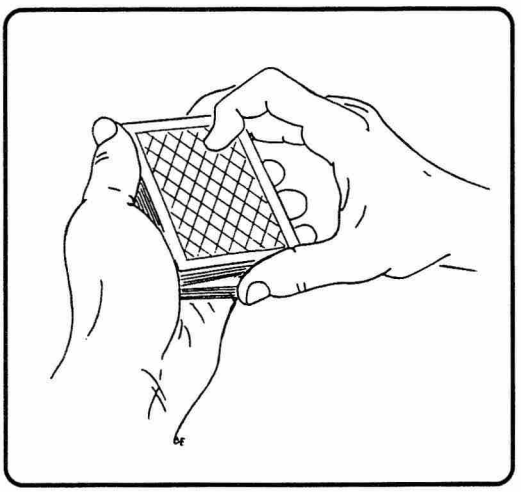


Whichever of these two handlings you use, you can now control the card to the top or bottom of the deck using the overhand shuffle method described next.

Check Points

1. This control uses an unconventional method for having a spectator note a card. But unconventional need not mean suspicious. To justify the procedure you could say, *"Don't take the card out of the deck and replace it; just remember a card that you see."* Or *"Don't remove a card, just think of one that you see."* Indeed, the technique lends itself well to presentations suggesting that the spectator merely thought of a card. Don't overemphasize this, however. Doing so could cause a scrupulous observer to mention that the card was not thought of, but looked at. Choose your words with care; for example: *"You are the only one who has seen the card. Please picture it clearly in your mind. At this point, only a mind reader could know which card you are thinking of."* See how subtly and elegantly a proper exposition has led to a false assumption? When reviewing the procedure a second or third time during subsequent phases, you may now refer consistently to the "thought-of card" without risking an intellectual confrontation.
2. You can use the right index finger in place of the middle finger to do the riffling. This produces a different picture and is largely a question of taste.
3. The whole secret of the successful execution of the peek technique is in the pressure of the left thumb against the base of the index finger. Keep in mind the analogy to the screw.
4. Don't forget to turn you head away as soon as you begin to riffle the cards. And only turn your gaze back to the spectator after the deck has been squared at the fingertips.

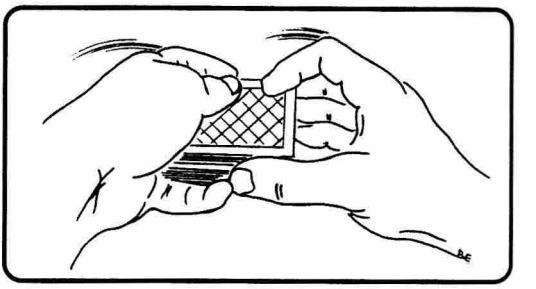
The Post-peek Overhand Shuffle Control



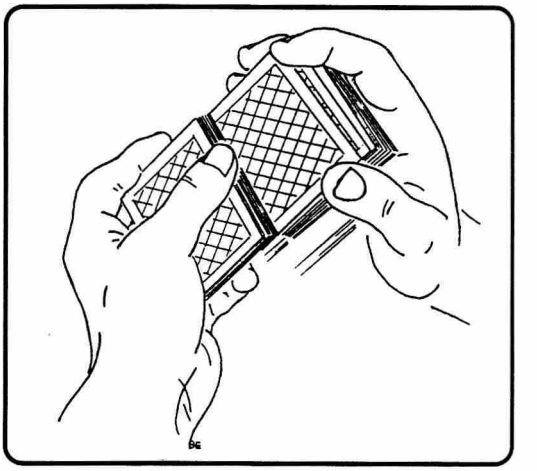
This method, suggested by Dai Vernon,[8] can be used not only to control a card peeked at by a spectator, but any card under which a break is held, such as after a diagonal insertion. It is an extremely versatile technique that will prove useful to you in many situations.

Hold a left little-finger break under the card to be controlled. With your right hand, grasp the deck in preparation to adjust it to overhand shuffle position. The right thumb and middle finger are at the ends near the right side, and the thumb takes over the break from the left little finger.

While the right hand momentarily controls the cards, move your left hand to overhand shuffle position at the left side of the deck. Pivot the right hand slightly clockwise, preparing to grasp the deck in overhand shuffle position.



While the right hand holds the deck very lightly by the ends, bring the cards to a vertical position. They are now in standard overhand shuffle position. Throughout this procedure the right thumb has maintained the break. Immediately place the outer phalanx of the left thumb on the raised right side of the deck and pull off all the cards above the break in the first shuffle action. Shuffle off the rest of the deck onto the left hand's stock. The card is now at the bottom of the deck. You can leave it there or bring it to the top with a second shuffle.



Check Points

1. The tricky part of this technique is in the third phase, when the deck is being brought from a horizontal to a vertical position. This will only work if the right thumb and middle finger handle the deck very lightly. This allows the deck to pivot without the thumb losing its break.
2. Begin the shuffle as soon as the deck is in overhand shuffle position.

A Peek Control for Two Cards

In principle, the number of cards noted and controlled by consecutive peeks is limited only by the number of fingers lying along the right side of the deck, since each can hold a break. For practical purposes this kind of control is limited to three cards. Here is a simple method for controlling two peeked cards, invented by the remarkable American card master Edward Marlo.[9]

Hold the deck in left-hand peek position. Riffle the outer right corner of the deck and ask a spectator to call *stop*. Riffle slowly to ensure that a card is selected from the lower half of the deck. As soon as the spectator has noted the card, release it, taking a left little-finger break *over* it, and riffle off the rest of the cards. You now hold a little-finger break above the first spectator's selection.

Repeat the selection process by having a second spectator call *stop*. This time you riffle more rapidly, so that a card in the upper half of the deck is chosen. Use the pad of the left ring finger to take a break *under* the second spectator's selection.

Square the deck at the fingertips and allow several seconds to pass, perhaps using this time to make appropriate comments relating to the effect at hand. Then, with your right hand, cut off all the cards above the top break and drop this packet onto the table. Next cut off all the cards above the second break and drop this packet onto the first. Finally place the remaining cards from the left hand on top of the tabled cards. This automatically brings the second selection to the bottom of the deck and the first to the top. A simple, economical—but very effective—two-card control.

Check Point

You can also control both cards to the top. To do this, take both breaks above the selections. Cut off and table the cards above the top break, then cut to the second break, using a slip cut to pull the top card onto the lower packet (see page 61). Place the second packet onto the first. Finally drop the third packet onto the tabled cards—both cards are now on top of the deck.

The Multiple Peek Control

With this peek technique (inspired by a concept exploited by Dai Vernon, the Canadian-American genius of magic[10]) you can theoretically control any number of cards. For practical purposes, you should limit yourself to no more than a half dozen. The method is ideal for controlling two or three cards. As the hand positions have already been described, the explanation needs no illustrations.

Have the first card peeked at and take a break above it. Bring the deck into overhand shuffle position and shuffle off to the break, throwing the balance on top. The first card is now on top of the deck.

Turn to a second spectator and again have a card peeked at. Take a break above it and once more bring the deck into overhand shuffle position. Without hesitating, with your left thumb pull off all the cards above the break as the initial action of the shuffle. Run the next card—the second spectator's card, then injog the following card and shuffle off the rest of the deck. Form a break under the injogged card and shuffle off to the break, throwing the rest of the deck on top. The second selection is now on top of the deck, directly above the first selection.

Repeat this procedure for each subsequent selection. This will bring all the selected cards to the top, in reverse order. If you require the selections to be in the order they were selected you can accomplish this in two brief shuffles. Let's assume three cards have been chosen, and that they now rest in three-two-one order on top of the deck. Run three cards, injog the fourth and shuffle off. Obtain a break under the injog, shuffle off to the break and throw the last three cards on top. The selections are now in one-two-three order.

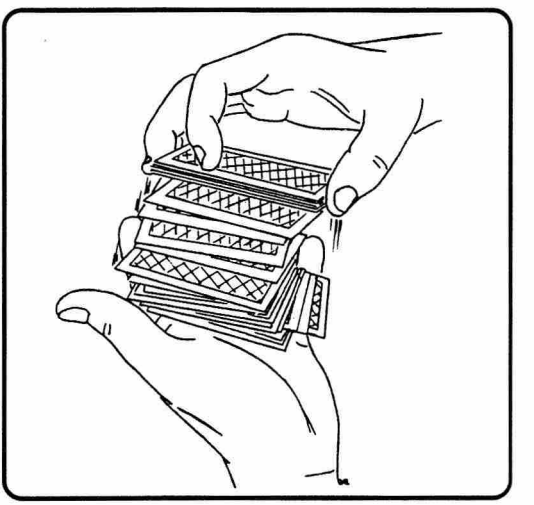
Check Points

1. In this method, a shuffle follows each selection. Make the best of this situation by using the shuffle time to advance the plot with presentational patter.
2. If this control is being executed in a parlor setting, use spectators seated far apart. Then shuffle as you proceed from one spectator to the next.

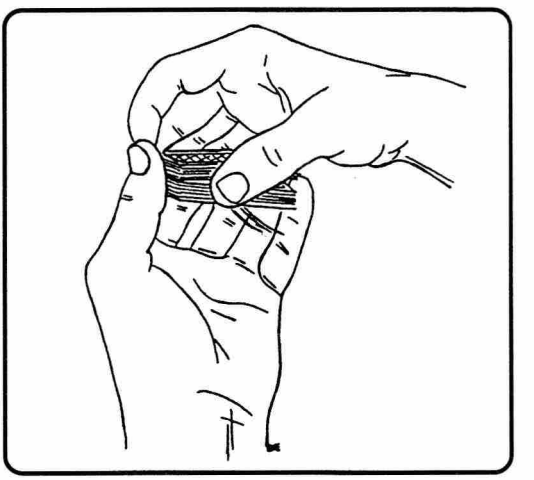
The One-card Middle Pass

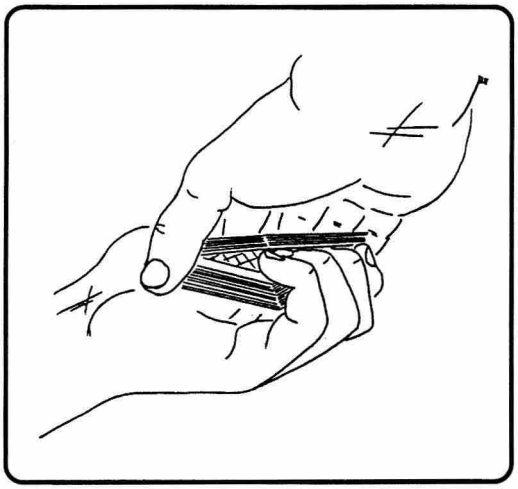
Although we will not discuss the pass until Chapter 19 (in *Volume 2*), I would nevertheless like to discuss this exceptional pass here. It is my handling of Ken Krenzel's one-card middle pass,[11] and I think it one of the very best techniques for bringing a card undetected to the bottom of the deck.

Have a card chosen by dribbling the deck into the left hand and stopping where the spectator requests. This person takes the top card of the left hand's packet and looks at it. As this is being done, add the balance of the cards to the deck and square it. Next dribble about half of the cards into the left hand and have the selection replaced while you hold the outer end of the right hand's packet slightly lowered. Begin to dribble these cards onto the left hand's packet. Thanks to the angling of right hand's packet, the first few cards that fall onto the selection will be slightly injogged. After these initial cards have dropped, smoothly return the right hand's packet to a horizontal position as you continue to dribble all the cards into the left hand.

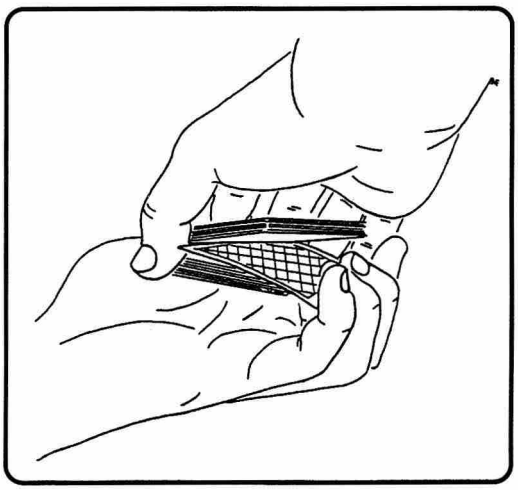


Square the deck at the fingertips, taking a break with the right thumb under the injogged cards. As the deck is lowered into standard dealing position in the left hand, transfer the break to the left little finger.

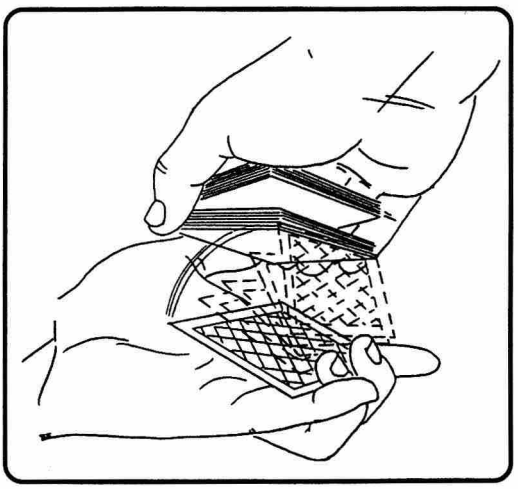




Briefly review what has happened: *"Your card is somewhere here in the deck."* With these words you casually dribble the cards back into the left hand in the following manner: Take the deck into right-hand end grip. As soon as the left fingers are masked, insert the outer phalanges of the little, ring and middle fingers into the break. The fleshy pads of the fingers contact the back of the chosen card lightly along its right side.



With your right hand, lift the deck about one inch, intending to dribble the cards into the left hand. This will automatically draw the chosen card partially out of the deck on the right side. Do not move the left fingers—their light pressure and the action of the right hand suffice to bring the card into the required position.



With the right hand, lift the deck farther still, until the chosen card is free of it. At that very moment—and not a fraction of a second earlier or later—dribble the right hand's cards into the left hand and onto the chosen card. With the proper timing, the release of the chosen card coincides with the dribble and cannot be detected from virtually any angle. Square the deck and set it on the table.

Check Points

1. The removal of the card is better concealed from the front if the left hand pivots the extracted card about twenty degrees clockwise. This is precisely shown in the next to last illustration.
2. It is critical that the extraction of the selection blend optically with the dribbling of the deck. This is what makes the pass invisible from practically every angle. As in most passes, the view from the right is the most vulnerable.

Other Controls

Other controls of one or more cards are described elsewhere in the course. They are mentioned here as a reference, once you have completed the course.

Transfer Cuts (Chapter 6): Once a break is taken above or below a card, it can be controlled with a double or triple cut. But always follow this procedure with a false shuffle that brings the card to the top or bottom, or leaves it where it is. A cut by itself is a bit too obvious.

The Key Card (Chapter 10): This places a whole chapter full of control methods at your disposal.

The Hindu Shuffle (Chapter 11): This can be used to control one or more cards.

The Spread Cull (Chapter 13): This is the ideal method for controlling a card that has been located in a face-up spread by means of a key card to the top of the deck. But you can also use it to bring a card above or below a break to the bottom of the deck as the cards are spread face down.

The Pass (Chapter 19, *Volume 2*): This is probably the most direct method for bringing a card to a desired position in the deck without visible motion.

The Crimp (Chapter 22, *Volume 2*): The crimped card acts as a key card (see above). You need only find the position of the crimped card to proceed with a control (for example, an overhand shuffle or a pass).

TRICKS WITH CARD CONTROLS

The Shamus Card

Effect

A card freely chosen by a spectator is found in the deck at a position determined by a "shamus card". The obvious fact that the shamus card is randomly arrived at and could have been any card makes this trick all the more unexplainable.

Construction, Management and Script

Allow a spectator to choose any card, show it to the rest of the audience and replace it in the deck. Bring it to the top using the overhand shuffle control.

"Your card is now somewhere in the deck. Of course, 'somewhere' means that it is in a particular location, but one determined entirely by chance. In other words, it is lost. So I will need a 'shamus card' to track down your card and tell me exactly where in the deck it is." As you say this, give the deck an overhand shuffle, pulling off about half the deck into the left hand, running eleven cards, injogging the next, then shuffling off. Form a break under the injog, then shuffle off to the break and throw the balance of the deck on top. This positions the spectator's card twelfth from the top.

Ribbon spread the deck on the table from left to right. Ask a spectator to choose any card as the "shamus card". When this has been done, push the ribbon spread together and place the squared deck face down on the table. The spectator is now asked to reveal the shamus card to everyone. *"Aha! You hired a particularly talented gumshoe,"* you exclaim. *"This fellow will lead us directly to our missing card."* No matter what card is chosen, by using its name you can always arrive at the twelfth card, dealing one card from the top of the deck for each letter spelled. For example, "Four of Clubs" spells with eleven letters—as do the "Ten of Spades" and "Jack of Hearts"—after which you turn over the next card. "Nine of Hearts" spells with twelve, so you turn over the last card of the spell. With some names, like the "Eight of Hearts", you have thirteen letters—too many. So you drop "of" from the name in this manner: *"Our shamus is a heart: H–E–A–R–T–S; and he's an eight: E–I–G–H–T."* In this way, you deal eleven cards and turn up the twelfth.

There are only eight cards in the pack whose names can't be made to spell with eleven or twelve cards as explained. Those cards are the Ace, Two, Six and Ten of Clubs, which all spell with ten letters; and the Three, Seven, Eight and Queen of Diamonds, which, if you drop the "of", spell with thirteen. In these eight cases we use not only the shamus's name, but the shamus himself. That is, you drop the shamus card on top of the deck and use this card as the first letter of your spell. Doing so places the selection thirteenth from the top. Since all four of the noted diamond cards spell with thirteen letters, the selection appears on the last card of the spell. For the four noted club cards, add "the" to their names ("The Six of Clubs"), bringing the letter count up to thirteen, and again turn up the last card. With practice, you will soon be able to spell using any card turned up, without the least hesitation.

Final Notes

1. Should the spectator choose the twelfth card from the top as the shamus card, you have been granted a minor miracle and should make the most of it.
2. If the spectator chooses one of the top eleven cards of the deck, place the shamus card face down on top and use it as the first card of the spell. Should the card happen to be one of the four diamond-cards that spell with thirteen letters, then you must spell "D–I–A–M–O–N–D" (no "S"). Simply spell its name, using the shamus card as the first letter, and turn over the next card. And if the shamus is one of the four clubs with ten-letter names, don't add the card to the deck; instead, spell its name with ten letters and turn up the next card.

The Question Is...

This trick by Karrell Fox[12] is short and to the point. But if you perform it you will see that it often makes a stronger impression on spectators than many more extended routines.

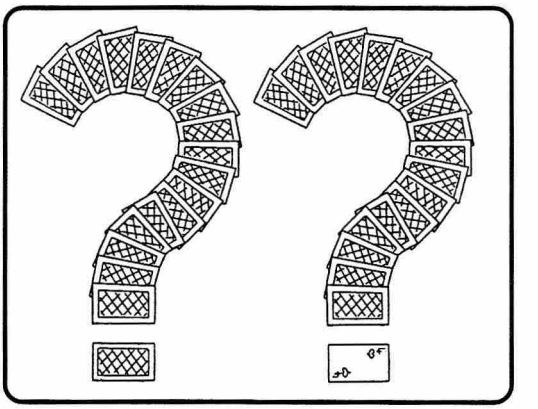
Effect

Someone notes a card, which is then shuffled into the deck. The performer forms the cards into the shape of a question mark—upon which the point of the question mark turns out to be the previously selected card!

Construction, Management and Script

Have a spectator choose and note a card, which you then control to the top. False shuffle and false cut the deck, keeping the selection on top.

"Naturally, the question now is which card is yours, and where in the deck is it? This can be represented symbolically by a question mark." Ribbon spread the deck on the table in the form of a question mark, using the top card (the selection) as the point: *"And that's the point. Without the point, there would be no question mark, and this question would be answered!"* As you say this, turn over the point card to reveal the selection.

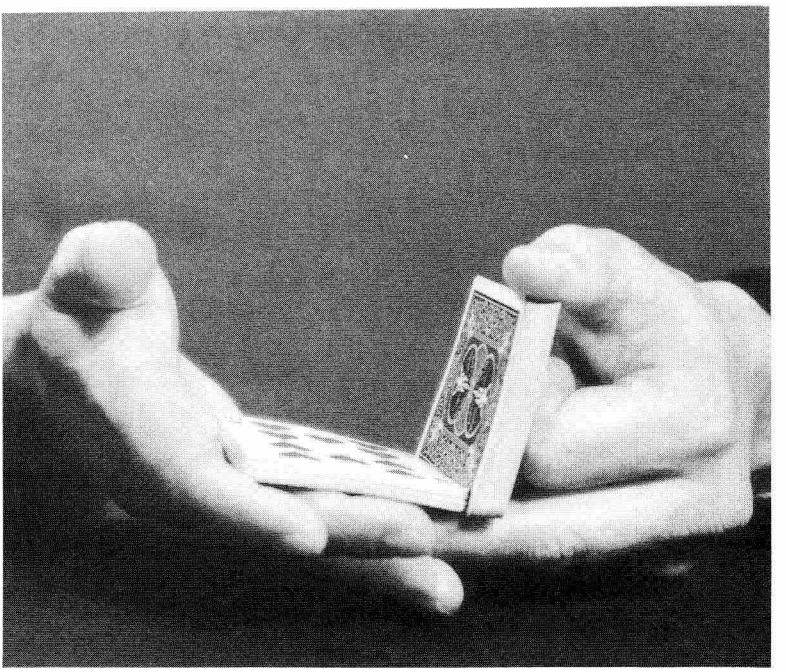


CHAPTER 5

FORCE TECHNIQUES, PART 1

"It takes a lot of work to make something simple."

Anonymous

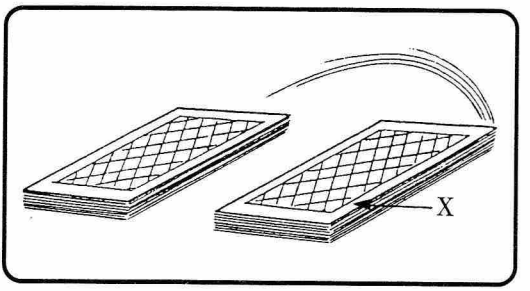


In this chapter I will share with you various force techniques. The French verb *forcer* basically means "to influence", and in German and English one actually often speaks of a "forced choice". Force techniques in card magic are procedures that lead a spectator to choose a particular card. The truly masterful methods require technical skill, sensitivity for the complex lines of communication between performer and spectator, and finally a good understanding of psychology. We will examine such techniques in Chapter 15. But in this chapter we will begin our studies with several simple and certain methods that always succeed.

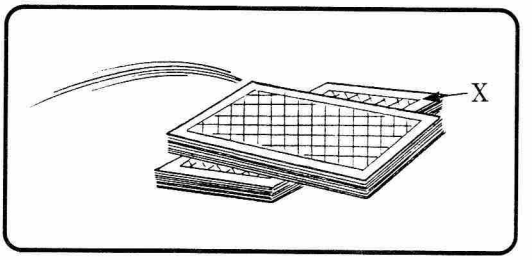
The Crisscross Force

This force has, over the past sixty years, gained immense popularity with card conjurers because of its simplicity and deceptiveness. It is the invention of Max Holden,[13] a professional magician who retired from the stage to become a New York magic dealer and one of the larger mail-order magic businesses of the twentieth century.

The card to be forced is face down on top of the deck. In the illustrations the location of the force card is marked with an X. Ask the spectator to cut the deck near center.

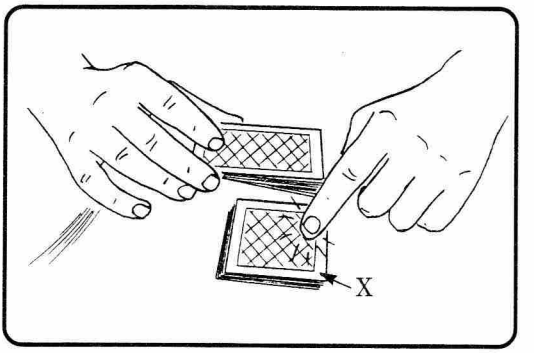


Take the original lower half and place it onto the upper half, but give it a quarter turn in the horizontal plane: *"We'll mark the place where you cut the cards."* You must now fill some time by talking about or explaining something pertinent to the effect. I will give examples in subsequent trick descriptions.



After the pause, which should last at least ten seconds, continue with the force. Thanks to this diversion, the spectator will no longer be certain which half was originally the upper and which the lower. This is known as *time misdirection*. Complete the deception by using your right hand to pantomime the action of cutting off part of an invisible deck in midair—*"You cut the deck at any location..."*—and place the imaginary right half on and at right angles to an imaginary lower half—*"...and we marked that location.*

"Please look at the card at that point." With your right hand, lift the real upper half and indicate the top card of the tabled half. This is the force card.



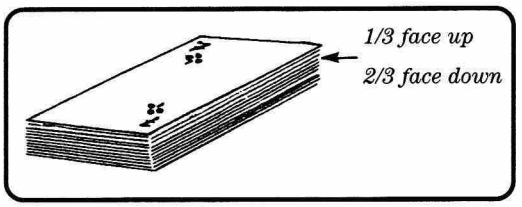
Check Points

1. It is best if the spectator cuts the deck near center. This makes it more difficult to differentiate between the upper and lower halves. Generally is it enough to ask the spectator to "cut the deck in the center". If you ask with confidence but without emphasis, the spectator will do exactly as you request. If the spectator resists your instruction, simply state that cutting at center makes the experiment more difficult. This line of persuasion will usually defuse any further objection. If it doesn't, use another spectator.
2. If you know both the top and bottom cards of the deck, this technique can be used to force two cards simultaneously. Simply display the top card of the tabled half and the bottom card of the upper half.

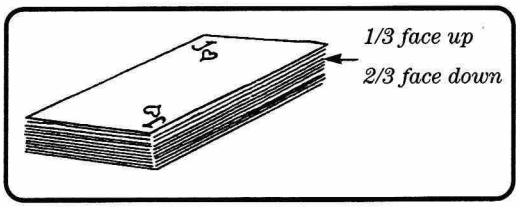
The Balducci Force

This technique was originated by the American magician Ed Balducci.[14] I shall describe here the most basic handling, which has inspired numerous variations since its inception.

The force card is second from the top of the deck. Let's assume that the top card is the Ace of Spades and the intended force card beneath it is the King of Hearts.



First demonstrate what you wish the spectator to do: Cut off about a third of the deck from the top and turn it over, placing it face up on the face-down tabled cards.

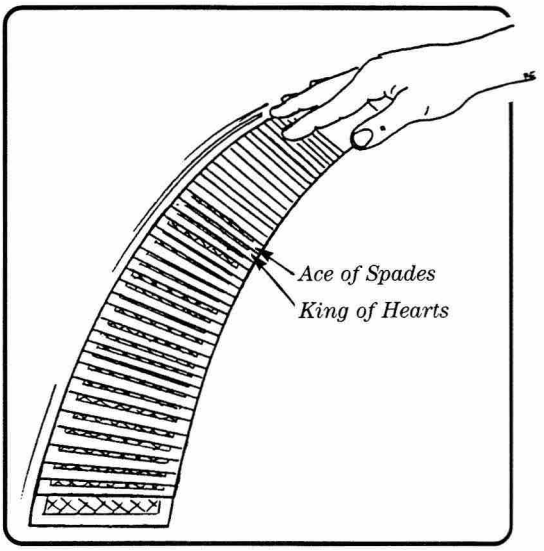


Then cut off about two-thirds of the deck, turn this packet over and place it on top of the tabled cards. As you do this, explain exactly what you are doing, as the spectator must repeat your actions:

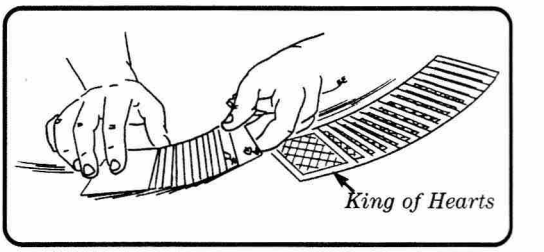
"Cut off a small portion of the deck, turn it over and place it reversed on the other cards. To make the procedure even more random, cut once again, but this time cut off a larger portion and turn it over on top of the rest of the deck."

Ribbon spread the deck on the table from left to right. Approximately a third of the deck is face up, while the other two-thirds is face down. Continue your explanation:

"Then look at the first face-down card to which you have cut. In this case, it would have been the Ace of Spades."



Show the Ace of Spades to the audience, then use it to scoop up the face-up cards from left to right. Turn these cards over, place them under the face-down spread and square the deck. The force card is now on top. If the spectator follows your instructions, the King of Hearts will be chosen.

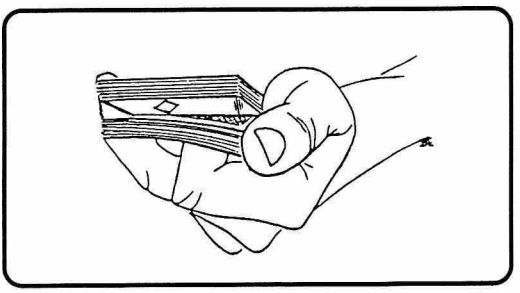


Check Points

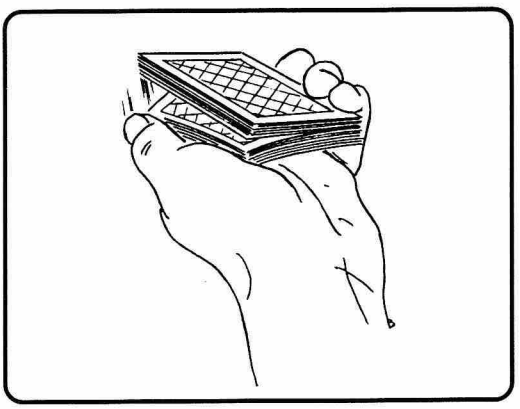
1. Do not omit the initial demonstration (a shrewd psychological ruse suggested by Edward Marlo[15]). It ensures that the spectator knows exactly what to do, but it also makes it difficult (even for experts) to keep track of the positions of the cards.
2. If you want, you can repeat the demonstration. In that case, the force card would initially be placed third from the top.
3. This technique can be used to force several cards, one after the other. After each selection you must take care to bring the original top portion back to the top as you re-assemble the deck. The force cards are placed consecutively on top of the deck.
4. If it makes no difference which card is forced, you can begin by having a spectator shuffle the deck. Ribbon spread the shuffled cards face up on the table to display their mixed condition, and in the process secretly note the second card from the top. Scoop up the cards, make a comment that delays the proceedings for a moment, then go directly into the force procedure.

The Goldin Force

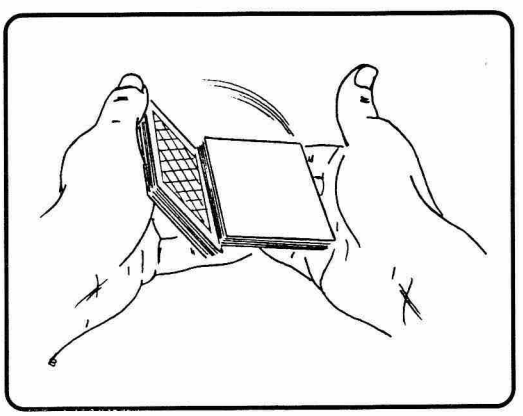
This technique was created by the Polish-American stage magician Horace Goldin.[16] It is quite easy and well suited for standing performances, as the procedure takes place in the performer's hands.



Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position, the force card positioned on top. With your left index finger curled under the deck, pressing against the face of the bottom card, use your left thumb to riffle down the outer left corner. Ask the spectator to call *stop* at any point. (Spectator's view shown here.)

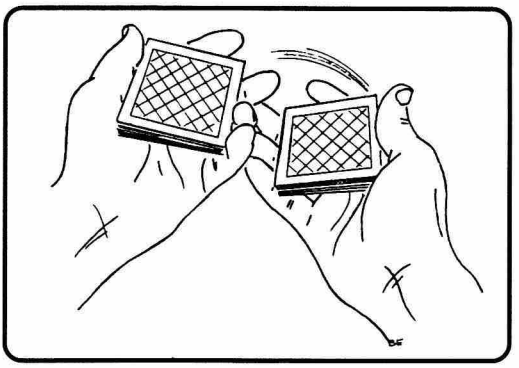


As soon as this is done, stop the riffle and pull down strongly on the unriffled cards with the left thumb. This opens a large break at the outer left corner between the riffled and unriffled cards, the former being held only along the right side by the outer phalanges of the left middle, ring and little fingers.

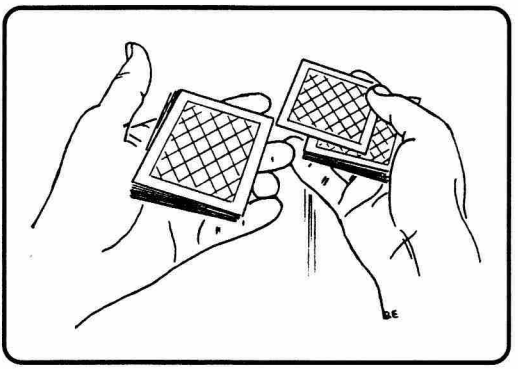


Tip your left hand downward on the right and relax the grip of the left fingers. This releases the riffled portion, causing it to roll over and off the left fingertips to land on the the strategically placed middle, ring and little fingers of the open right hand.

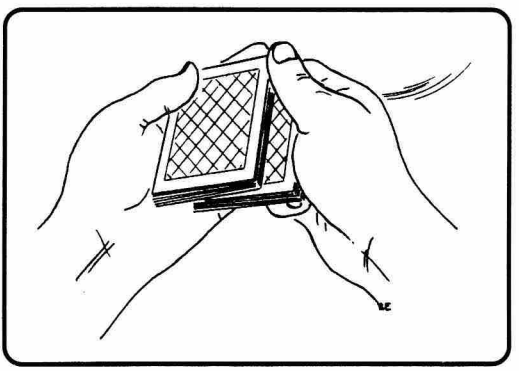
Close the right fingers, turning over the riffled packet, which lands face down in right-hand dealing position.



Simultaneously lower the right hand about two inches with respect to the left and extend it toward the spectator. With the right thumb, push the top card of the riffled portion to the left and offer it to the spectator as a free selection. It is, in fact, the force card.



Bring back the right-hand cards and place them beneath those in the left hand. This visually reinforces the impression that the spectator has been offered a card from the center of the deck.



Check Points

1. Use a controlled gaze when performing this force to minimize the attention the spectator gives to certain aspects of the procedure: Look at the deck during the riffle, saying, for example, *"Good, we'll stop right there."* Now look the spectator directly in the eyes as you say, *"Please remember your card."* During this moment of divided attention you carry out the division of packets described above.
2. Just as critical as the gaze is the conscious use of the two planes of the cards (that is, the lowering of the right hand's packet with respect to the left hand's). Only when this is done will the deception be perfect.

The Ten-to-twenty Force

Although this is a force based purely on a mathematical principle, when properly performed the spectator will be unable to unravel the underlying secret.

The card to be forced is tenth from the top of the deck. When a specific card must be forced, first cut the card to the top (advanced students will use the spread cull described on page 187), then shuffle nine cards onto it. If no specific card is required, you can secretly note the tenth card while ribbon spreading the deck face up on the table after it has been shuffled by a spectator.

The spectator is asked to name a number *between* ten and twenty. Assume that someone says fifteen. Give the deck to the spectator with the request that fifteen cards be dealt face down in a packet on the table.

You explain, *"Magic numbers are always single digits, so let's add together the two digits of your freely chosen number."* Adding together one and five in the example gives six. The spectator is to deal six cards from the top of the tabled packet and note the sixth. It is the force card.

A Trick with the Force

The Lie Detector

Effect

The spectator notes any card in the deck, then removes any other seven cards, naming them aloud, one after the other. But on one of the cards, the spectator lies, naming the noted card instead. Using the principles of lie detection, the performer is able to ascertain the moment of the lie and name the noted card.

Construction, Management and Script

"Surely everyone has heard of the controversial but fascinating lie detectors. But who among us has ever had the opportunity to be hooked up to one? In the next experiment I will carry out a lie detection test with..."—look over the audience, finally fixing your gaze on one of the spectators—"*...you! Have no fear, you need not tell a real lie. I suspect that, as an honest person, you have too little practice for that. But you will lie for our entertainment only. I promise, this little lie won't cause your nose to grow."* With these or similar words you introduce the theme of the presentation.

Force a card on the spectator—let's assume it is the Nine of Hearts—using one of the above methods. A direct force such as the crisscross or Goldin force works best here. The spectator is asked to note the card, show it to everyone except you, and place it off to one side, under the card case.

Take the deck and ribbon spread it face down on the table. Then ask the spectator to remove any seven face-down cards from the spread.

"Please hold the cards in your hands, but spread them so that only you can see their faces." The spectator is now to name the cards truthfully, one after the other. But on one of the cards, your amateur prevaricator must lie, naming in its place the selected card. *"Make sure not to hesitate when you name the false card. You may want to decide now at which card you'll substitute the name of yours. And don't blink your eyes or change the tone of your voice. In fact, a good strategy would be to use a different tone of voice for each card, so that I have no basis for comparison."* Encourage the imaginative participation of the spectator, for such participation can produce very amusing and entertaining situations.

At this point you can concentrate purely on the presentation, since you already know the spectator's card. Wait until all the cards have been called out and note at which position the chosen card was named—let's assume it was the fifth card. After a brief pause, you claim somewhat hesitantly, *"Yes, it's quite clear now; you did lie on one of the cards—and not at just any card, but precisely on the fifth card. Your card is the Nine of Hearts!"*

If the spectator forgets the card or names a false one, don't panic; you had the card set off to one side at the beginning. At the conclusion you can confirm the correctness of your assertion by turning the selection face up. This provides a bit of insurance against skeptical spectators who don't believe your lie detector premise.

Final Notes

1. It is always an advantage to be able to speak competently about the theme of your presentation. Read about the basis for polygraphy (the science of lie detection) in a good encyclopedia and incorporate this knowledge into your presentation.
2. If you use the crisscross force, have the deck shuffled, note the top card while spreading the deck for display on the table, gather the spread and carry out the first half of the force. Now make your introductory remarks about lie detection. This provides time misdirection to separate the cutting of the cards from the noting of the selection.

CHAPTER 6

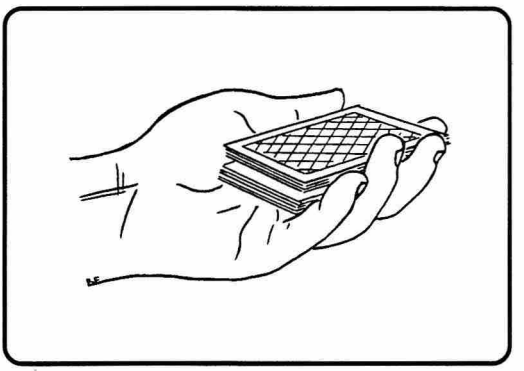
TRANSFER CUTS

The great Russian painter K. P. Bryullov once corrected a student's picture. Incredulous, the student looked at the altered drawing and cried out, "How is it possible? You only changed a detail, yet it is completely different!" Bryullov replied, "Art starts where this detail begins."

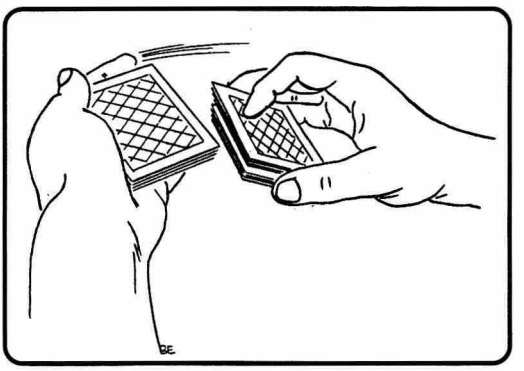
In these techniques the deck is cut several times to bring cards from above or below a break to the top or bottom of the deck. This does not alter the positions of the cards relative to one another in the deck. Such techniques were developed by the Canadian master Dai Vernon, whose work also popularized them.

The Double Cut

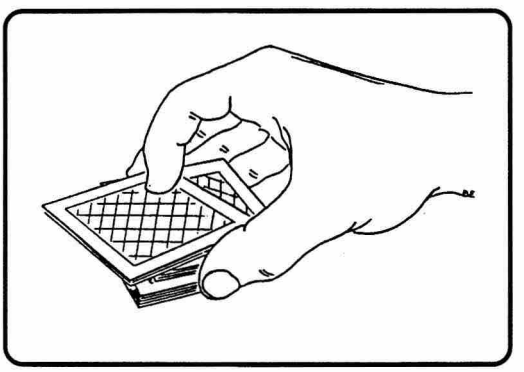
Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position, maintaining a break near center with the left little finger. Assume this break is held above the Seven of Hearts. Our goal is to bring the Seven to the top using a two-cut sequence.

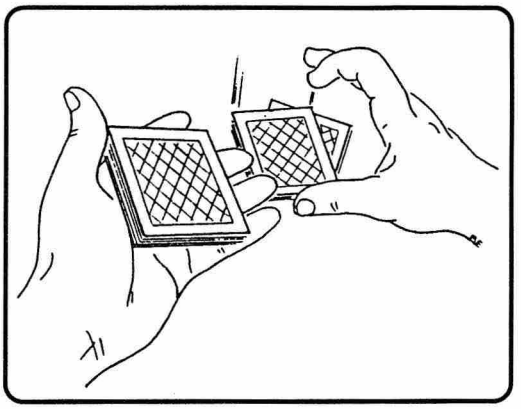


Take the deck into right-hand end grip, transferring the break to the pad of the right thumb. With your left hand, cut about half the cards below the break to the left.

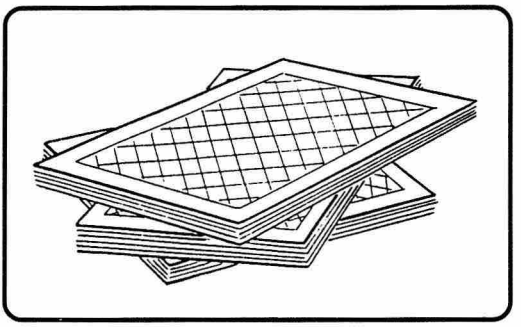


Place the left hand's packet onto the right's, but leave it diagonally misaligned. Exert light pressure from the right index finger on top and from the right thumb and middle finger at the ends to maintain this unsquared condition of the deck.





After transferring the bottom packet of the deck to the top, the left hand resumes dealing position beneath the deck. With your right hand, cut off all the cards above the break and let them drop, still unsquared, onto the table.



Finally use the right hand to place the remaining packet onto the tabled packets. Let the unsquared condition of the cards register for a few seconds; then square the deck (see page 107 for the preferred method of doing this). The Seven of Hearts is now on top, but the relative order of the cards is undisturbed.

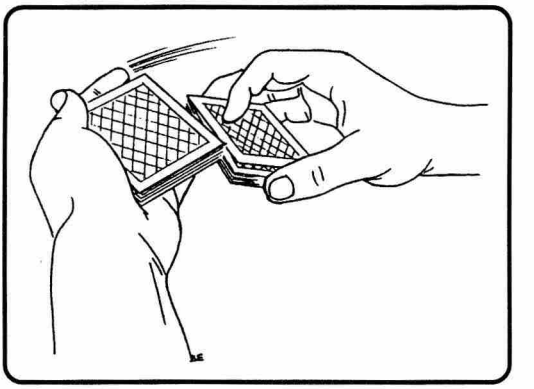
Check Points

1. Begin the left hand's cutting away of the bottom cards as soon as the right hand grasps the deck from above. This prevents even those spectators on your left from seeing the break.
2. If there is no table available, this process can be performed in the hands: Hold a left little-finger break above the card. Then grasp the cards in right-hand end grip as previously described, taking over the break with the right thumb—and, with the left hand, cut about half of the lowermost cards to the top. This packet need not be squared. Finally, again with the left hand, cut all the cards below the break to the top and square the deck. Once again the Seven of Hearts is on top while the relative order of the cards has been preserved. The placement of the first packet on top of the deck and the removal of the rest of the cards under the break should blend into a single, smooth action. This makes the cutting efficient and elegant.

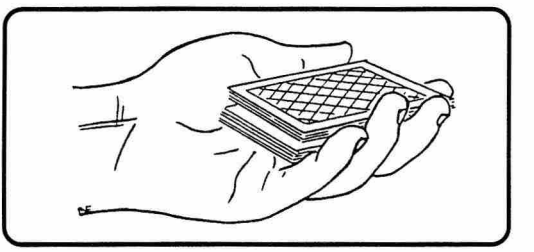
The Triple Cut from Top to Bottom

The purpose of this technique is to bring the top card of the deck to the bottom through a series of cuts, while preserving the relative positions of the cards. The same principle can be employed to bring the bottom card to the top. In theory, the double cut just described could be used for this purpose; but in this context it would look to the spectators as if the deck were simply cut twice at the same location, raising the suspicion that the two cuts have changed nothing. Also the finesse of the unsquared packet is not effective with a single card. For these reasons we use an extension of the double cut; namely, the triple cut.

Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position, with a little-finger break caught beneath the top card. This card will be brought to the bottom through a series of cuts. Take the deck in right-hand end grip, transferring the break to the right thumb. Simultaneously, use the left hand to cut off the bottom third of the deck.

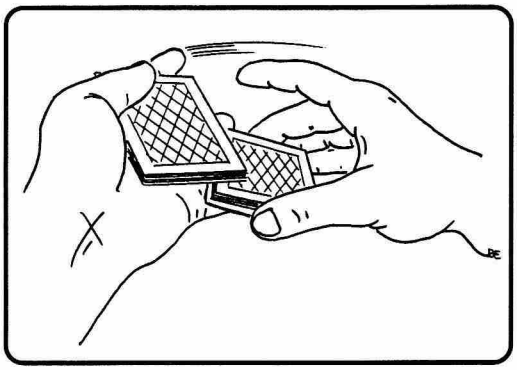


Place this third on top and square the cards, maintaining the right thumb's break under the former top card. You are now in starting position for the double cut done either on the table or in the hands, which you carry out as previously described.

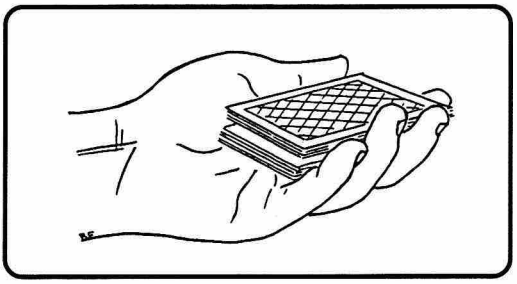


The Triple Cut from Bottom to Top

This technique is similar to the last, except that the bottom card is brought to the top, without disturbing the relative order of the cards.



Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position, with a little-finger break formed above the bottom card. Take the deck into right-hand end grip, shifting the break to the right thumb. Then perform a swing cut, using the right index finger to lift and pivot the top two-thirds of the deck into the left hand.



Place the left hand's packet under the third of the deck still held in the right hand and square the cards, your right thumb maintaining the break over the former bottom card. Proceed exactly as in a double cut to bring the original bottom card to the top without changing the relative order of the cards.

TRICKS WITH TRANSFER CUTS

Triple Coincidence

This amazing trick[17] is the cunning creation of John Scarne, a legendary American card expert and gambling authority who, among other honors, was in 1938 voted one of the "Ten Card Stars" then living. I have made only a few minor changes to Mr. Scarne's handling.

Effect

Two decks are used, one with red backs, the other with blue backs. The performer and a spectator each shuffle a deck and three times exchange a single card. When both decks are ribbon spread it becomes apparent that the three cards match—a triple coincidence!

Preparation

Take any three cards from the red deck and distribute them evenly in the blue deck. For the sake of explanation, assume the three cards are the Three of Hearts, the King of Clubs and the Two of Spades. Place the same three cards from the blue deck on top of that deck. You now have a red deck that is short three cards and a prepared blue deck that can be introduced at any time you decide to perform this trick.

Construction, Management and Script

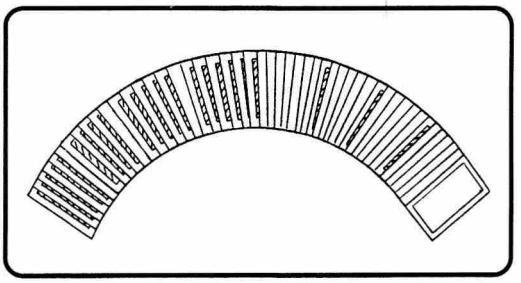
Give the spectator the red deck with the request that it be shuffled. Remove the prepared blue deck from its case while saying, *"I'll need a second deck for this trick. It has a different colored back than the red deck..."* Spread the top few cards between your hands to display the blue backs, taking care not to expose the first red card, whose position you should note in advance to prevent this. Briefly ribbon spread the cards face up on the table: *"...but the faces are the same as in your deck."* Square the deck and give it a face-up overhand shuffle to avoid flashing the red backs. Take care during the shuffle to retain the three-card stock at the back of the face-up deck. (A face-up false riffle shuffle can be used here instead. That shuffle will be taught in the next chapter.)

"This trick is an experiment in chance." Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position and deal the top card face down onto the table. Instruct the spectator to cut the shuffled red deck, complete the cut, then place the resulting top card face down on the table. Take that card and set it on top of your deck, holding a break beneath it. Have the spectator place your tabled card on the red deck, then bury it with a cut.

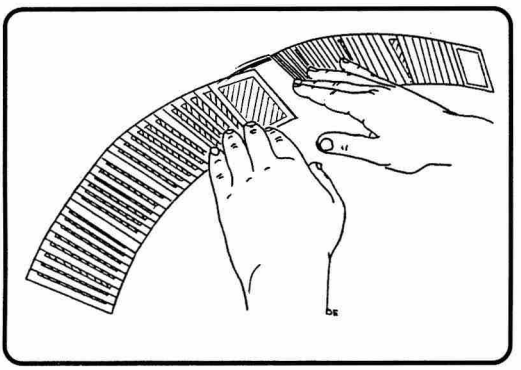
You apparently do the same, but actually use a triple cut (page 97) to bring the spectator's card to the bottom of the deck. As you make these cuts, be sure not to expose one of the other red-backed cards in your deck. This is easily prevented by riffling lightly up the inner end and cutting at any blue card. This is only necessary on the first cut, since on the subsequent cuts you might really be cutting to the first of the spectator's red cards.

Repeat the procedure just described twice, exchanging two more pairs of cards. The spectator can shuffle the red deck as much as desired between exchanges. Always place

your card on the table before the spectator lays down one from the red deck, and stress this fact in your presentation. At the conclusion of the exchanges you have three randomly chosen red cards at the bottom of your blue deck, and three predetermined red cards distributed through it. The corresponding blue cards are in your helper's red deck.



Have the spectator set the red deck face down on the table. *"Playing cards have empathy with one another."* Place the blue deck onto the red and ribbon spread both decks together across the table.

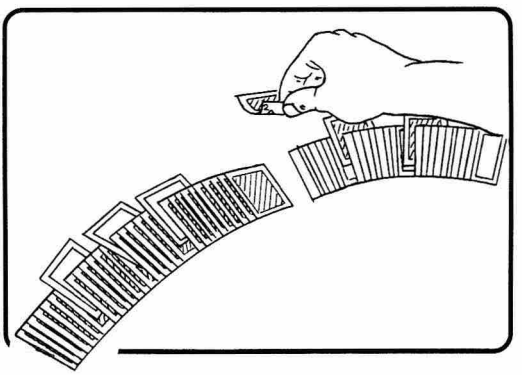


As soon as this is done, spread the decks a few inches apart at the point where they join. This disposes of the three indifferent red cards in a subtle manner.

"Often, chance will dictate that these six cards bear a very specific relationship to one another. Keep in mind that you freely chose the cards from a deck you shuffled yourself. And I always chose my cards before you chose yours."

These words prevent the climax from being exposed prematurely. Some spectators may anticipate the outcome, but they will not be certain. The fairness of the proceedings must be clearly summarized at this point. The clearer the procedure at the beginning, the stronger and more inexplicable the effect at the conclusion.

Push the stranger cards in your deck forward and ask the spectator to do the same. By grasping the card at the inner end with the thumb on the face and the fingers on the back, it is a simple matter to peek at the faces of two of the cards as you push them forward.



"Let me show you what I mean." Have the spectator turn over one of the blue-backed cards removed from the red deck. If it coincides with one of the two cards you peeked at, turn the corresponding card face up. Otherwise turn over your third card. Accelerating the pace, have both of the other cards turned face up to show that all three pairs of cards coincide perfectly!

Final Note

The deceptiveness of the presentation will be increased if you use the red deck, which is missing three cards, in several preliminary effects. Most tricks don't require a complete deck and can be performed with only forty-nine cards without a problem.

Seventh Son of a Seventh Son

A simple method coupled with a mysterious and fascinating presentation make this a strong and memorable effect for lay audiences. To create it I have simplified the handling of a trick titled "The Seventh Son" in Hugard and Braue's *Expert Card Technique.*[18]

Effect

Someone removes a card from the deck without looking at it. Three spectators then each name a number and for each the magician deals that number of cards face down on the table. The card removed by the first spectator turns out to be a Seven. After pointing out the mysterious connotations of the number Seven, the performer turns the bottom card of each packet face up: they are the other three Sevens!

Preparation

The four Sevens are on top of the deck. This can be accomplished during a preceding effect or by using a spread cull (see page 187). A matchbox containing several matches is on the table. If you have no matches and cannot borrow any, use a few coins in a coin purse.

Construction, Management and Script

Give the deck a false overhand shuffle, keeping the four Sevens on top of the deck. Now run the top two cards to the bottom, so that the deck has two Sevens on top and two on the bottom. Have a spectator cut the deck and place the lower half obliquely on the upper half (the crisscross force). Then deploy a little time misdirection by introducing the theme of the effect: *"I would now like to ask you to choose a card randomly from this shuffled deck. But you will see that it is not just any card, but your personal lucky card. Let's take the card to which you have cut."* Place the top card of the lower half face down on the table and reassemble the deck with one Seven on top and the other two on the bottom.

Turn to a second spectator and ask this person to name a number—for the sake of expedience, a number between one and ten. Assume the number named is five. Hand this spectator the deck, requesting that five cards be dealt singly from the top into a face-down pile on the table. This brings the Seven on top of the deck to the bottom of the dealt packet. Hand the spectator the matchbox as you take back the deck into left-hand dealing position. Ask the spectator to remove a match from the matchbox and place it on top of the dealt packet, *"... so that no one can alter the contents of the packet, either from above or below."* As the spectator is carrying out your instructions, calmly double cut the bottom card to the top. (See Note 2 below.)

Give the deck to a third spectator, who is asked to name a number as well. This person is also asked to deal that many cards face down and singly from the top of the deck into a pile on the table. Exchange the deck for the matchbox as you instruct the third spectator to place a match onto the dealt pile. With a double cut, bring the bottom card of the remaining packet to the top.

Now ask a fourth spectator to choose a number, deal that many cards into a pile and place a match onto it. At the conclusion of this, there are three packets on the table, each of which has a Seven on the bottom. Technically, the trick is over, but from the spectators' point of view it has harldy begun.

The by-play with the matches stresses the fact that nothing will happen to the packets. But it also provides you with an excuse to take back the deck and gives you time to carry out the necessary double cuts. Probably no one will notice that you handle the cards at all, but should someone watch, you are merely cutting the deck casually.

The first spectator is now asked to turn the "lucky card"—that chosen in the beginning—face up and show it to everyone. *"You really are lucky, for the Seven is not only your lucky card, but has been regarded since antiquity as a mysterious and magical number. The Greeks had their seven sages. There were the Seven Sleepers of Epheseus and Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. In Holy Writ we have the seven seals, the seven stars, the seven lamps, the seven loaves, the seven deadly sins and the seven virtues. There are seven days in the week, seven whole notes in music and the seven colors in the spectrum. The number seven truly has more than numerical importance. Perhaps, you will say it's a coincidence, that you have chosen a Seven. But it would be absolutely unbelievable for all of you"*—indicate the three spectators who dealt packets—*"to end up with Sevens!"* Turn up the three tabled packets and... curtain. If anyone now thinks that you only perform "tricks", then either that person is unconscious, or you have done something dreadfully wrong.

Final Notes

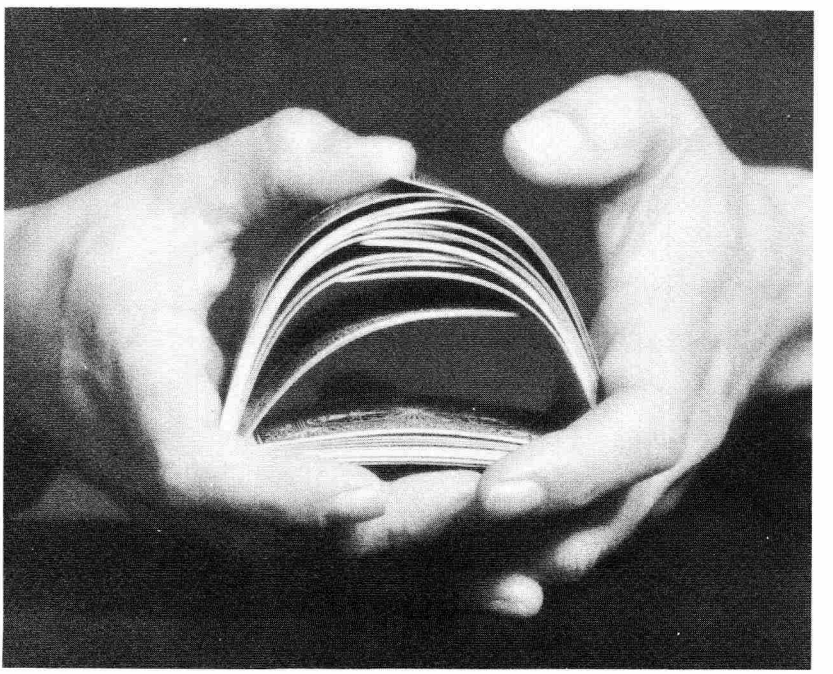
1. When you learn the classic force in Chapter 15, you can use it to force the first Seven. The execution of the force is easier than usual, since the spectator can take any one of four consecutive Sevens. After one of the Sevens has been removed, you cut the deck to bring one Seven to the top and two to the bottom. Then simply proceed as previously taught.
2. To bring the Sevens from the bottom to the top, I have suggested that you execute double cuts rather than triple cuts. While I cautioned against double cuts for this purpose earlier (page 97), in this instance they are permissible, since they are carried out casually on the sidelines while everyone's attention is on the actions of the spectators.

CHAPTER 7

RIFFLE SHUFFLE TECHNIQUES

"He who does not constantly improve, ceases to be good."

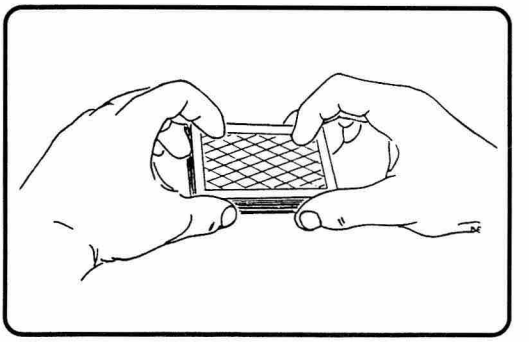
A. S. Grove



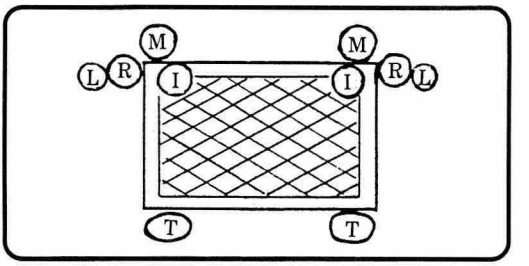
The riffle shuffle is the shuffle preferred at gambling tables. This is primarily because it was once thought that the riffle shuffle made cheating more difficult. Today there is more literature devoted to various riffle shuffle techniques than to any other shuffle. Anything you can do with an overhand shuffle can be done with a riffle shuffle, and much more besides.

Although most card players know and use the riffle shuffle today, many people still find it fascinating when it is neatly performed, perhaps partly because of its association with gambling and its lore. You should therefore include in your performances tricks using the riffle shuffle. In this chapter we will become familiar with the basic riffle shuffle techniques. Don't neglect to master these basics from the outset, as they will be the foundation for more advanced techniques you will encounter later.

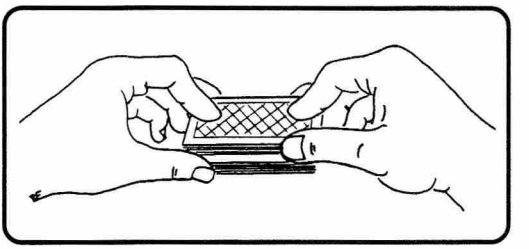
The Closed Riffle Shuffle



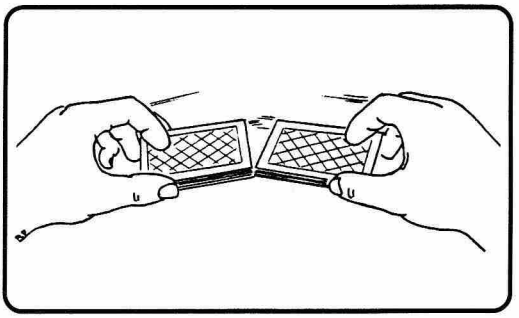
Position the deck on the table with one side facing you and grasp the cards as shown in the illustration. The bases of the little fingers contact the table, giving the hands a relaxed appearance. The thumbs are at their respective inner corners. The outer phalanges of the ring fingers are bent so that their outer sides contact the ends of the deck at the outer corners. The little fingers lie next to the ring fingers. Finally, the outer phalanges of the index fingers are bent and contact the top of the deck.

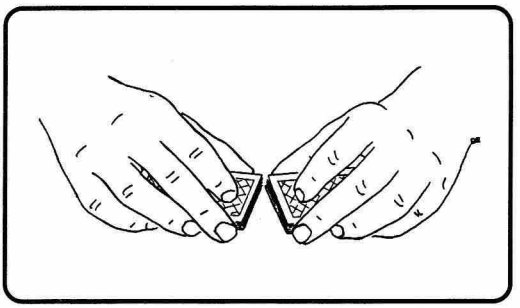


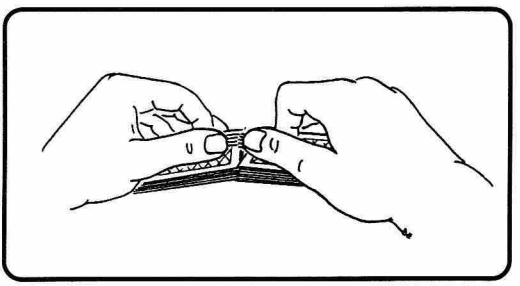
This illustration is a finger diagram, showing the positions of the fingers with respect to the deck. Such diagrams show the exact positions at which the individual fingers contact the deck, and are often used to illustrate riffle shuffle techniques. This position will be referred to as the *riffle shuffle starting position.*

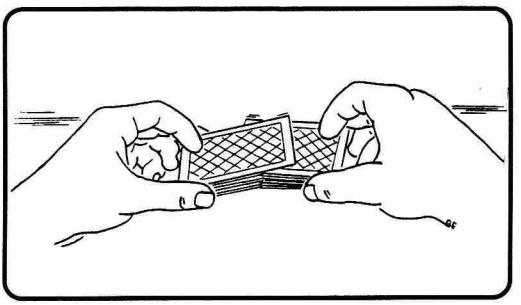


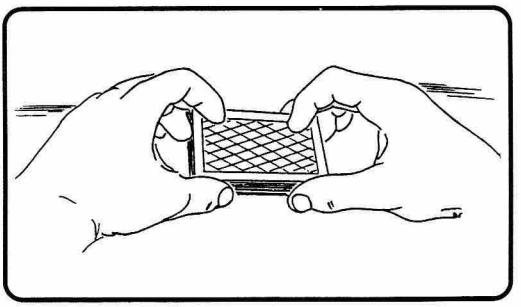
We now begin the actual shuffle. Using your right thumb, riffle off about half the cards from the bottom of the deck. To facilitate this, press the right index finger lightly down on top of the deck. The inner side of the deck will open along its entire length, but no break should be visible at the outer side.











Grasp the lower half of the deck between the left thumb and middle finger and pull it half the length of the deck to the left. Mirror this action with the right hand, pulling the upper half to the right. Since both hands move, the cut takes half as much time as it would otherwise. The symmetrical action is both efficient and æsthetically pleasing. The halves of the deck lie flat on the table in a slight V-formation, the inner corners touching lightly. Take care that the finger positions remain unchanged during the cutting.

Only now do the hand positions change. Grasp each half with its respective hand as shown in the illustration (a front view). The bases of the little fingers continue to maintain contact with the table.

With the thumbs, lift their respective corners of the packets about half an inch, and press lightly down on top of the deck with the index fingers in preparation for letting the cards riffle off. When they do so, the inner corners will interlace. Begin the riffle by releasing a few cards from the right thumb, then riffle the cards evenly, releasing the left hand's top cards last. This shuffles the original top and bottom cards into the deck.

You will next push the halves together. This requires another change in hand positions, which amounts to resuming the starting position, but with the cards now interlaced. With your ring fingers, push the halves together. The little fingers assist by pushing gently behind the ring fingers. No force is applied by the other fingers: they merely guide the cards.

Only when the halves have been securely interlaced for an inch or more do you straighten them from their slight angles and push them flush. The shuffle is concluded by squaring the deck neatly, using the technique that immediately follows (Squaring After the Shuffle). In practice the shuffling and squaring procedures form a single smooth sequence of actions.

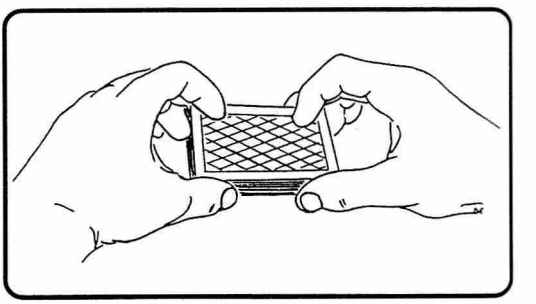
Check Points

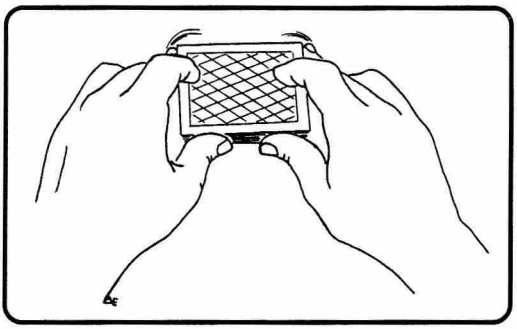
1. This technique in particular is easier at the outset if you work on a padded surface. But practice it and all the other riffle shuffle techniques on a hard surface as well, so that you will be prepared for any conditions.
2. Don't forget to keep the bases of the little fingers in contact with the tabletop throughout the shuffle. Only in the final phase of the shuffle—as the halves are pushed together and just before they are squared—is it permissible to lift them from the table. Even then it is not necessary—you can perform all the actions with the hands resting on the table.
3. Carefully study the finger diagram for the riffle shuffle starting position and memorize it. Don't fall back on old habits, in which the deck may have been held quite differently.
4. When riffling the cards to interlace them, they are barely bent. Though one often sees the cards bent severely during the shuffle, it is not necessary, may damage the cards and does not look good. Performed properly, the riffle produces the sound of a softly purring cat, not the noise of an ice-breaker. Mastery of the riffle shuffle requires technique, not strength.
5. In pushing the halves together, the cards may bind. If you experience this, relaxing your grip on the cards should make it easier to proceed. If necessary, the packets may also be gently "scissored" back and forth to loosen them.
6. This version of the riffle shuffle is referred to as "closed" because a portion of the deck is hidden during the shuffle. This is useful in hiding the condition of the deck when, for example, some cards are secretly face up in a deck that is supposedly face down.

Squaring After the Shuffle

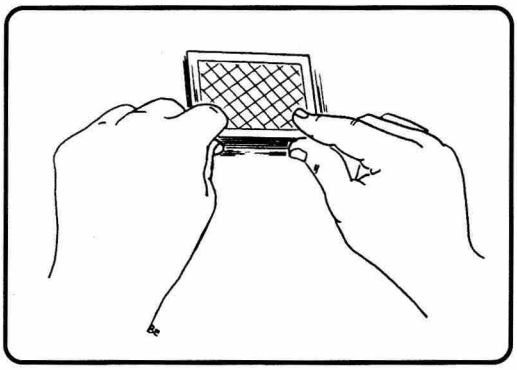
After each riffle shuffle you will want to square the cards. This method, one first recommended in print in 1902 by the mysterious card sharp S. W. Erdnase,[19] is a particularly efficient and elegant method of doing so.

After you have executed the riffle shuffle, the deck will be in a slightly unsquared condition and you will be holding it with your hands in the riffle shuffle starting position.





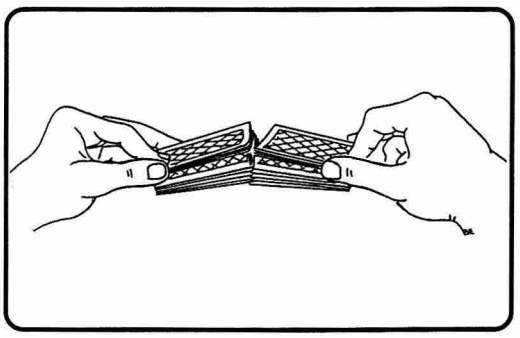
Extend your thumbs toward the center of the inner side, until the thumbtips lightly touch, and slide the middle fingers around the outer corners to their respective ends. The ring and little fingers move aside a short distance to make room for this action. The illustration shows a view from above.



Slide both thumb and middle finger of each hand toward their respective inner corners, the index fingers following passively over the top of the deck. This stroking of the ends and inner side squares the deck. You then either remove the hands from the deck or resume riffle shuffle starting position, depending on the requirements of the particular routine.

The Open Riffle Shuffle

This riffle shuffle, in which most of the deck remains visible, differs from the closed riffle shuffle in only a few details. Because of its "open" appearance, it looks fairer and is preferred to the closed shuffle. But it is a bit more difficult and requires greater coördination. In the beginning you will also think it requires greater strength, but—as with most techniques—this is just a temporary misconception. The true secret lies in properly coördinating the actions.



Hold the deck in riffle shuffle starting position. Divide the deck as previously described (see the first four illustrations of the closed riffle shuffle on pages 105 and 106). Maintaining the hands in their positions, begin to riffle the cards with the thumbs, interlacing the adjacent corners as shown in the illustration. Push the interlaced halves together and square the deck as previously described.

Check Points

1. This technique is not only more open, but obviously more efficient, since it does not require as many changes in hand positions.
2. The outer, lower edge of the left half of the deck maintains constant contact with the table top. Also keep the outer phalanx of the right middle finger in contact with the table top during the cutting. And don't lower the right thumb to the table after dividing the deck; rather keep it elevated, so that it can immediately begin to riffle the cards. Keeping the thumb raised eliminates the need to set down, then immediately pick up the right half of the deck again.

Riffle Shuffle Stock Controls

With the techniques described here you can control the top stock of the deck, or the bottom stock, or both, during a riffle shuffle; and you can use either an open or a closed riffle shuffle. I recommend that the open riffle shuffle be used wherever possible.

Control of the Top Stock

The top card of the deck can be controlled easily with the riffle shuffle. Carry out the normal shuffle with one small alteration: simply release the original top card last. The same principle can be applied to control the top few cards. This technique is not recommended for controlling more than eight cards on top, as the large size of the block could alert attentive spectators to the technique.

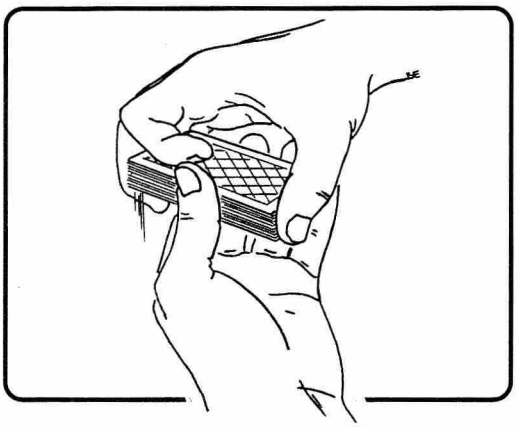
Control of the Bottom Stock

The principle here is the same as that used for controlling the top stock. To control the bottom card, release the lowest card of the left half first and riffle shuffle the rest of the packets together normally. To control more cards, I suggest that you begin the riffle shuffle above the cards in question. You could riffle these cards off first, but this creates some hesitation in the procedure, and it might be noticed that some cards are released in a block. By simply leaving the desired block on the table as the left thumb raises the cards above for the shuffle, you can deceptively control more cards at the bottom than you can on top; but limit the number to no more than a dozen, or the initial "bed" of cards will become obvious.

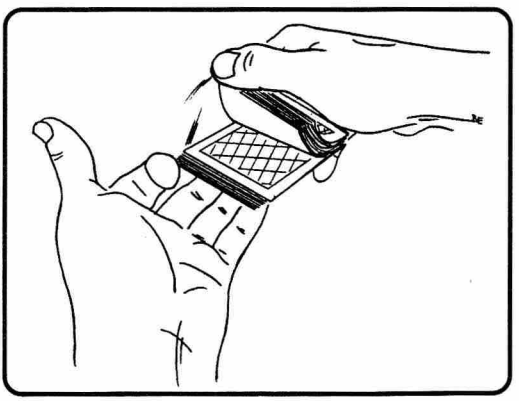
TIP FOR BOTH SHUFFLES: These two types of shuffles, when performed, can and should be repeated once or several times. French card-expect Bernard Bilis suggests that you cut the top portion to the right for the first shuffle, then cut that portion to the left for the second shuffle, alternating the direction of the cut with each new shuffle. In this way even someone trying to follow the top or bottom stock will be frustrated in the attempt. I would like to add that you should look up at the audience when you separate the deck for the shuffle, then look down again at the deck when you shuffle. Conclude the sequence with a tabled false cut (see Chapter 25, *Volume 2*).

The Waterfall Riffle Shuffle

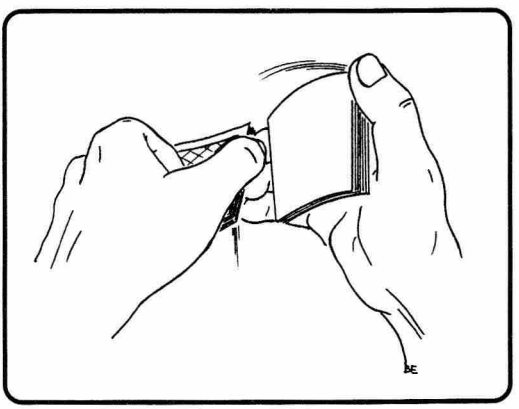
This technique is not only impressive to spectators, it is also very useful when no table is available. In those countries where cards games are popular, like the USA and England, this shuffle is quite common. But you should be aware that in other latitudes it is often regarded as a flourish, and if you find yourself working these climes you might consider prefacing the shuffle with a remark such as *"I'll shuffle the cards like the American card cheats,"* to give your use of the shuffle a presentational motivation.



Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position. Then take it into right-hand end grip and raise it to elevated dealing position. The outer phalanges of the right middle, ring and little fingers extend over the outer end of the deck, the pads of these fingers contacting the face of the bottom card. Press against the top card with the back of the outer phalanx of the curled right index finger.

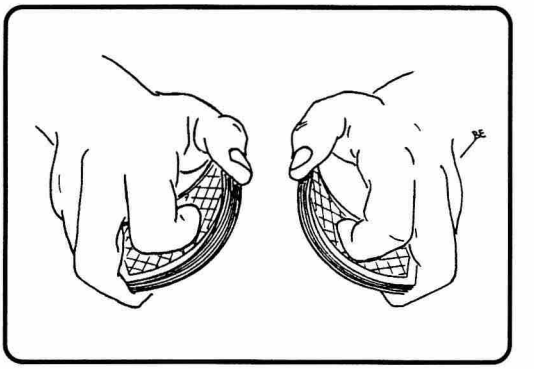


Rotate the deck about forty-five degrees clockwise until its length is parallel with your left fingers. You now control the deck entirely with the right hand. With your right thumb, bend up the inner end of the deck and allow about half of the cards to riffle off it. At this moment you are holding the released cards exclusively with the right middle, ring and little fingers. The bottom card of the riffled half lands on the pads of the left middle, ring, and little fingers. The left index finger is curled in to avoid contact with the underside of the packet.

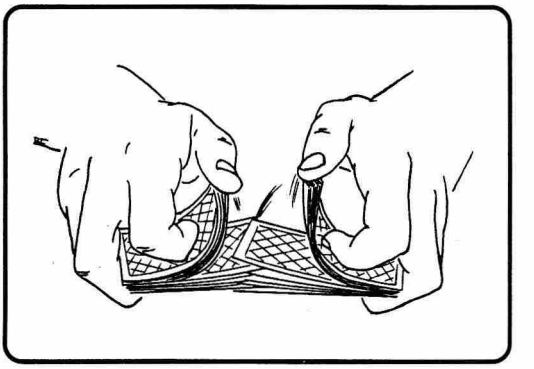


Uncurl the left index finger and place it on top of the released half. Next move the right hand upward, so that you can place your left thumb at the outer end of the lower half, using the pads of the right middle, ring and little fingers to facilitate this.

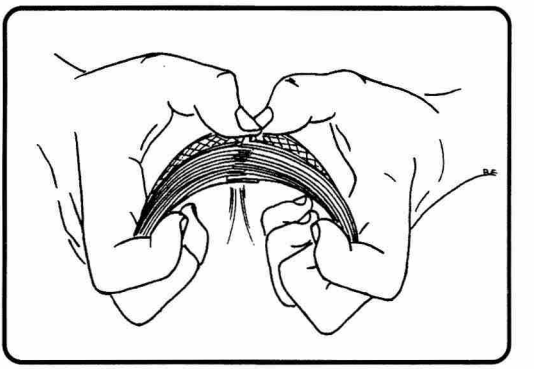
The hands hold their halves in the same grip, forming mirror images. This position is maintained for barely a second. The transition between the previous phase and the following one should be smooth.



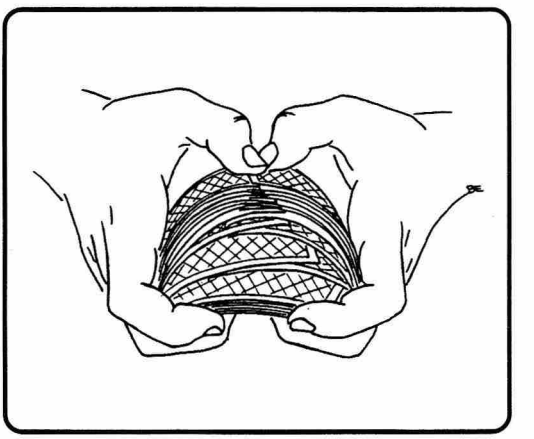
Riffle the cards uniformly off the thumbs, interlacing the two packets. As you do this, grip the cards securely with the middle, ring and little fingers of both hands underneath the packets, and the forefingers on top. Once the cards are interlaced, they are ready to be sprung together using the waterfall flourish.



Place both thumbs on top of the interlaced cards at their approximate center. Move the index fingers next to the middle fingers under the deck. Then bend the outer ends down, gripping them securely with the outer phalanges of the curled index, middle, ring and little fingers, which prevent the cards from springing down prematurely. Counter-pressure from the thumbs on top prevents the cards from springing upward.



Now uncurl the index, middle, ring and little fingers, gently relaxing your grip on the cards. The cards will automatically spring together in a cascade that is pleasing to both eye and ear. Keep the thumbs on the crest of the arch, preventing the springing cards from sliding off the deck at the end of the shuffle. With the right hand, rotate the deck forty-five degrees clockwise, take it into elevated dealing position and square it. If you lower the deck to normal dealing position, you'll have brought an æsthetically pleasing sequence full circle.



Check Points

1. Grasp the cards gently, but securely. Keep in mind that as you riffle the halves together you hold them only by the middle, ring and little fingers on the face of the bottom card and the index finger on the back of the top card.
2. All these individual steps should flow together without interruption, forming a harmonious whole. The shuffle should not be noisy, but produce a soft rustle.
3. Obviously this technique, like the tabled riffle shuffles, can be used to control the top and bottom stocks of the deck.

TRICKS WITH RIFFLE SHUFFLE TECHNIQUES

The Red-black Location

Effect

This is my simplified handling of a trick described by Persi Diaconis. Only later did I discover that I had unknowingly reinvented ideas conceived in the 1930s.[20] Someone freely chooses a card from a fan and replaces it anywhere in the deck. The spectator then shuffles the cards thoroughly. Nevertheless, the magician finds the card in a flash.

Preparation

Separate the red and black cards in the deck. For the sake of our explanation, let's assume that the red cards are on top of the black cards.

Construction, Management and Script

Begin by giving the deck a few false shuffles. Naturally, any shuffle that preserves the order of the entire deck will work, but here is a special overhand shuffle created by Charles Jordan,[21] which preserves the red-black separation of the cards: Shuffle off roughly twenty cards in several blocks, then run about a dozen cards singly till you have passed the center of the deck, and finish by shuffling off the remaining twenty-some cards in two or three blocks. Repeat the shuffle to bring the red cards once more above the black cards.

Spread the cards between your hands, pushing over the first twenty rather quickly in bunches, and force your spectator to choose a card from the lower half—in our case, one of the black cards. As the card is being shown to everyone but you, square the deck.

Spread the cards between your hands again for the spectator to replace the card, but this time spread the first twenty cards more slowly, so that the card is inserted into the upper half. There is now one black card—the card chosen by the spectator—among the red cards in the deck.

Try to note the position at which the card is replaced. This is not as difficult as it sounds, since you are practically spreading the cards one at a time. It should be easy to estimate whether it is about ten, fifteen or twenty cards from the top.

Push the cards together as deliberately and openly as possible, and ribbon spread the deck face down on the table as you review what has taken place. The important thing right now is that the cards are out of your hands for a moment, so that even the most skeptical spectator can see that everything is proceeding fairly.

Pick up the deck and turn to the spectator. *"I would like you to shuffle the cards yourself. You can use either a riffle shuffle or an overhand shuffle. It's up to you."* As you say this, you accompany your instructions with a demonstration of both shuffles. Place the deck on the table with one side facing you, in preparation for a tabled riffle shuffle. Cut

the upper half of the deck to the left and begin an open riffle shuffle. If you hold your hands somewhat farther from the body than normal, you will find that the indices of the left-hand cards are easy to see without your needing to watch the deck like a hawk. You must glimpse and note the only black card among the reds. This is the chosen card. A few practice attempts will confirm for you that the card can be accurately spotted without hesitation during the riffle. Glimpsing the odd card is made considerably easier, as you know approximately where it is.

Square the deck and give it an overhand shuffle in accordance with the script. Then hand it to the spectator for shuffling. Your shuffles have destroyed any clues that might have exposed your method. You can now reveal or locate the card in any manner you like.

Final Notes

1. If perform this as an opening effect, the cards can already be separated into reds and blacks. Don't, however, begin with the location described here, but with a few other effects that preserve the red-black separation. This delays the use of the stack and prevents anyone, even other magicians, from figuring out your method.
2. Ideally, you should perform this location in the middle of a program, after several spectators have shuffled the cards. As you proceed in your study of card magic you will find there are many tricks that permit secret sorting of the red and black cards during the course of the presentation.

Royal Flush Finale

This effective routine serves as an excellent opener, though it is not restricted to that role. It brings together several production techniques, along with ideas of Bruce Cervon[22] and a ruse—grown from ideas by American cardman Bob Veeser[23] and Australian performer Ian Baxter[24]—that has been subjected to many variations in recent years, in which four cards of the same value are seemingly cut to the tops of four packets. I have come up with a combination that is not too demanding technically, requires only a simple and quickly accomplished setup, and is visually appealing. The routine can be performed standing, but a seated position is more natural, as the routine employs riffle shuffle techniques.

Effect

The four Aces are produced from the deck in a spectacular fashion. The performer notes that a royal flush in poker is even better than the four Aces, and promptly cuts the deck into four packets. The top card of each packet is revealed as the Ten, Jack, Queen and King of Spades, which—along with the Ace of Spades—yield a royal flush!

Preparation

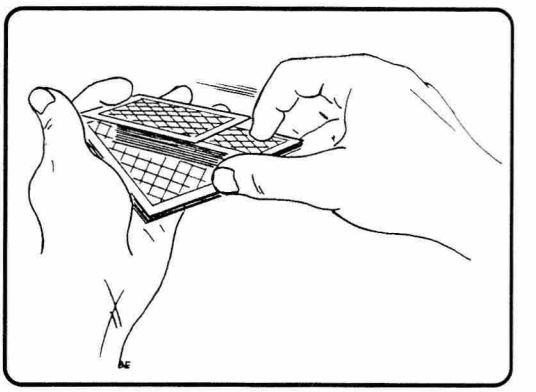
The preparation is so simple that it can be accomplished in the course of a preceding routine or while addressing the audience. (As you work through this course, on page 187

you will discover the spread cull, which is perfect for such tasks as this.) At the top of the face-down deck, reading from the top down, is the following eight-card stack: Ace, Ace, Ace, Ace of Spades, Jack of Spades, Queen of Spades, Ten of Spades and King of Spades. Only the position of the Ace of Spades, fourth from the top, is fixed. The positions of the other Aces are interchangeable, as are the positions of the four spades making up the balance of the royal flush. This flexibility allows the setup to be accomplished quickly. (When using the spread cull, you can generally arrange the eight needed cards with a single run through the deck.)

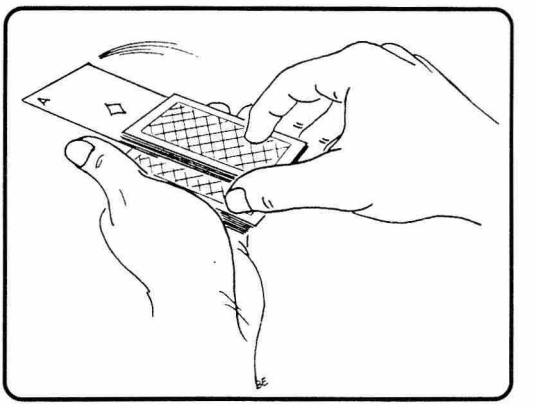
Construction, Management and Script

Spread the deck face up on the table, keeping the top eight cards bunched rather closely together to avoid exposing their arrangement. Then pick up the deck and hold it face down in left-hand dealing position. Proceed to give the cards a false overhand shuffle that maintains the top stock.

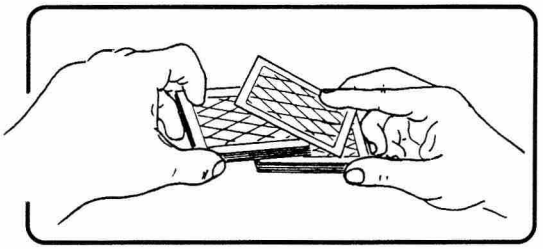
You will now produce the first Ace using a technique invented by the Dutch magician Eddy Taytelbaum.[25] Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position. With your right hand, grasp the upper half by the sides and lift it at the inner end. At the same time, curl the left index finger over the outer end of the deck, so that its pad contacts the back of the top card (an Ace). Then pull the upper half inward with the right hand, holding back the top card with a light pressure of the left index finger.



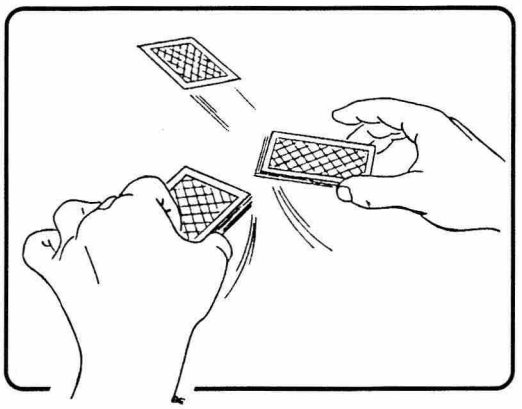
Now lift the upper packet slightly and push it forward until it is aligned again with the lower half, at which time you bring it down onto that lower portion. As you do this, you use the left index finger to lever the top Ace into a vertical position. The Ace pivots face up on the index finger tip, flipping end over end like the spring of a mouse trap. By quickly removing the left index finger from the end of the deck, the Ace will be caught face up between the half packs, from which position it projects out toward the audience.



Performed smoothly, it looks as though the card jumps face up from the deck and is caught in the middle. Set this first Ace face up on the table. Next give the deck several tabled riffle shuffles, maintaining the seven-card top stock.

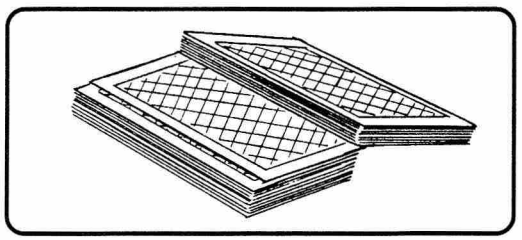


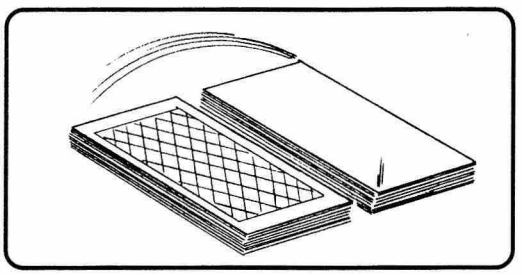
You will now produce the second Ace using a flourish spin cut invented by American magician John Benzais:[26] Hold the deck in starting riffle shuffle position, then cut the lower half forward with the right hand, as you simultaneously exert light pressure from the right index finger on the top card.



It is important as you make this cut (which is a form of tabled slip cut) that you move both hands apart and forward in diverging symmetrical arcs. As the top card is slipped from the left hand's half, the arcing motion of the right hand throws the card outward, causing it to pivot around the right middle finger and spin a few times as it flies forward. It should eventually come to rest face down in the center of the table.

Put the halves of the deck back together, with the six-card stack on top. Then turn the newly produced Ace face up and lay it next to the first.





Take the face-down deck into left-hand dealing position. Now, using the left thumb, push the top card about a quarter of an inch to the right and, with your right hand, cut something between half and two-thirds of the cards from the top of the deck to the table. Set the lower right edge of the remaining packet onto the table and lower left edge of this packet just over the right side of the Ace.

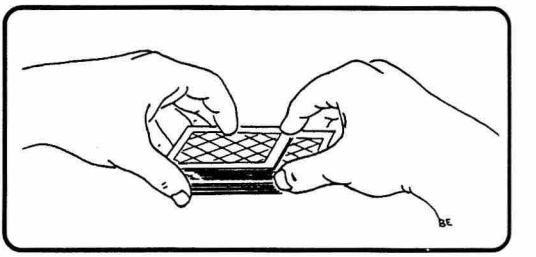
Immediately remove your hands from the cards. Under perfect conditions a second or two will pass before the weight of the right packet flips the slightly misaligned Ace face up. (This novel production is attributed to Michael Schwartz.[27])

With a little experimentation you will discover the proper position for the cards and the best size (that is, weight) of packet to use. This production is very pretty, particularly when there is a pause before the action. When this occurs one gets an impression of the card almost turning over by itself. A deck of cards that has been broken in can help to produce the desired delay.

After placing the third Ace face up beside the first two, set the left-hand packet onto the right, returning the royal flush stack to the top of the deck. Cut the Ace of Spades to the bottom with a triple cut (see page 93). The final Ace will be produced using the Cervon

technique mentioned at the outset. The shuffle involved will be used to set up the production of the royal flush.

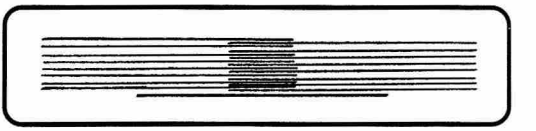
Hold the deck in starting riffle shuffle position. With your left thumb, lift the top two cards imperceptibly along the inner side and pull the top half beneath these two cards out to the right with the right hand.



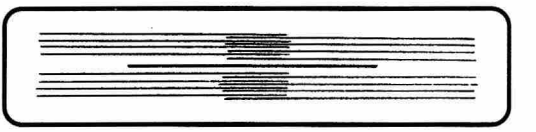
Begin a riffle shuffle by releasing a single card (the Ace of Spades) from the left thumb, then a few cards from the right thumb, then riffle off the rest of the cards normally. Having finished the riffle, do not square the interlaced halves. Instead, push them only about three-quarters of an inch into each other.

With the right thumb, lift the right-hand packet along its inner side keeping the lower outer edge of the interlaced packets in contact with the tabletop. This leaves the Ace of Spades lying alone on the table, concealed under the elongated deck.

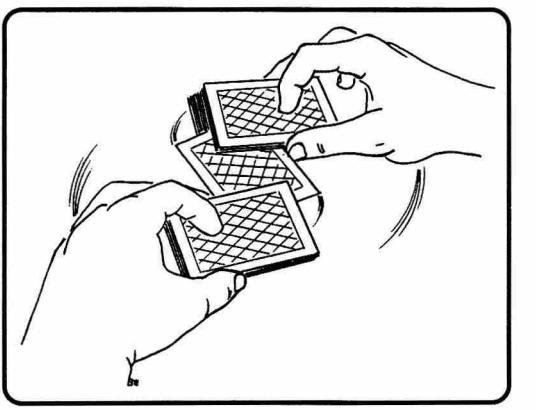
Push the interlaced packets to the left until the Ace of Spades is centered beneath them, and lower the inner side of the packets again to the table.

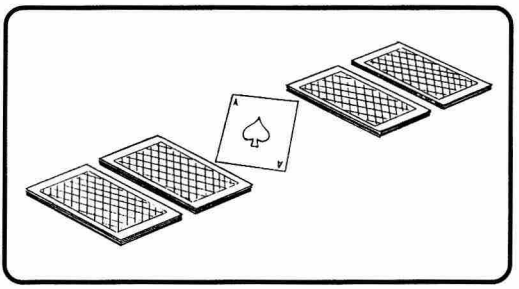


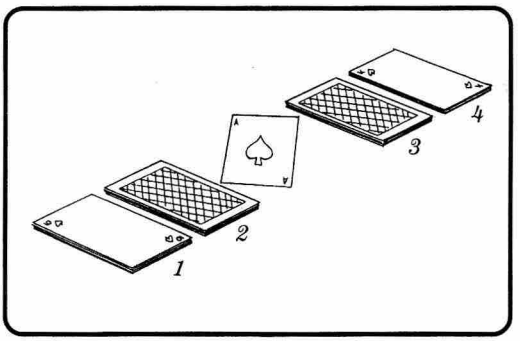
Next cut about half of the interlaced deck forward onto the table, then place the remaining cards, including the centered Ace, on top of these.

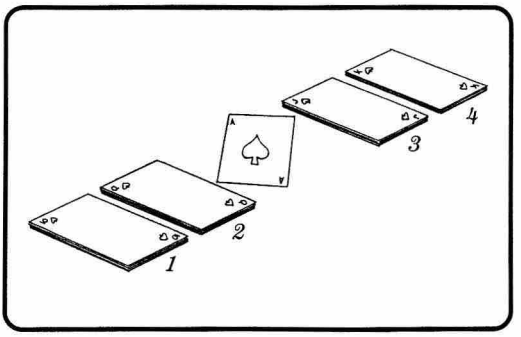


Hold the interlaced deck in starting riffle shuffle position, but with the thumbs at the approximate centers of their respective halves. If you now move the right hand outward and the left hand inward, both moving slightly counterclockwise, the Ace of Spades will emerge from the center of the separating halves, rotating on the right thumb and left middle finger. Stop with the Ace still projecting from both packets.









Cut all the cards above the Ace in the outer packet forward and all the cards above the Ace in the inner packet inward. Then slowly turn over the single card to reveal the final Ace, the Ace of Spades.

Give your spectators a few seconds to appreciate this pretty production; then quickly add, *"But when you are playing poker, there is something even better than the four Aces: a royal flush—in spades!"* Think of the four tabled packets as numbered one to four from the nearest to the farthest. With your right hand lift the top card of Packet Three and turn it over lengthwise and face up onto packet four. Simultaneously, with your left hand, pivot the top card of Packet Two face up onto Packet One.

Without hesitating, use both hands to turn up the top cards of Packets Two and Three, and leave them on top of these packets. This produces one card of the royal flush face up on each of the four packets. Performed smoothly and with confidence, this sequence gives the impression that the top card of each packet is turned face up (this clever cutting ruse is the one I alluded to earlier). Give it a try right now!

Final Note

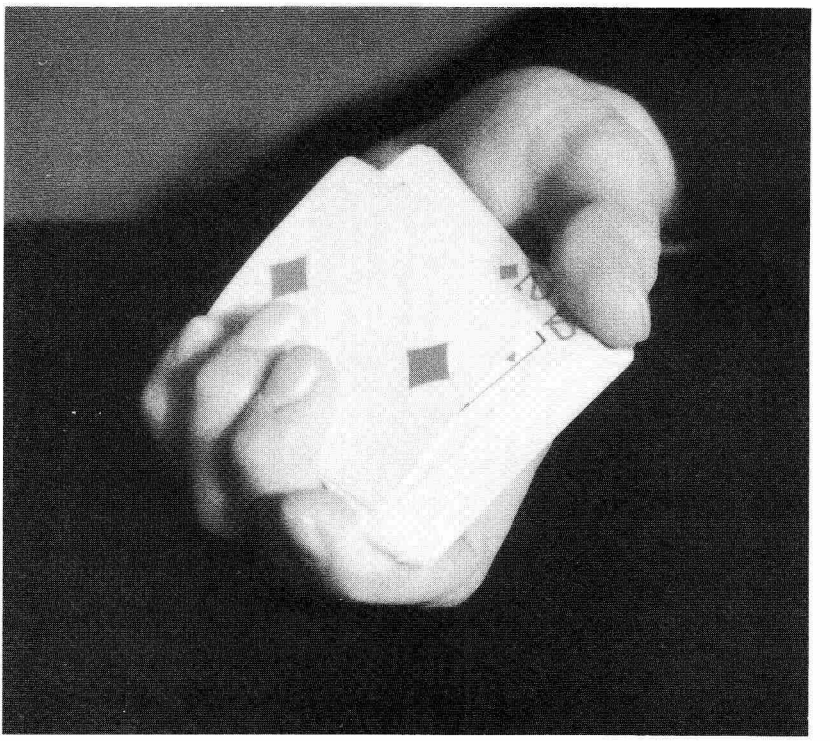
Of course, the deck can be false shuffled and false cut between each Ace production. The most natural method would use riffle shuffle techniques from this chapter and tabled false cuts from Chapter 25 (in *Volume 2*), since these leave the cards on the table and avoid excessive handling.

CHAPTER 8

THE GLIDE

"Anything done beautifully justifies its own existence."

Milbourne Christopher

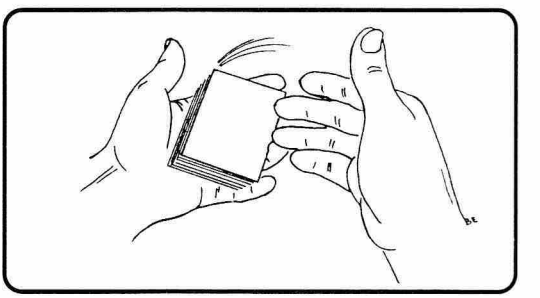


The glide enables you to exchange the bottom card of the deck for the card just above it. This very simple technique is useful in numerous tricks in which cards must be changed or exchanged. The glide should be regarded as a serious substitute for the much more difficult top change (see Chapter 16) and the double lift (Chapter 10 in this volume and Chapter 21 in *Volume 2*).

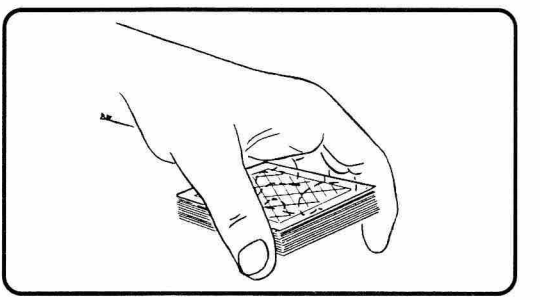
The Glide

Pay attention here to the exact positions of the fingers, which lead to an easier and more natural glide than is found with the traditional grip.

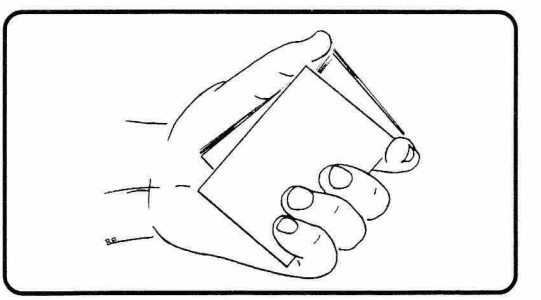
Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position; then, with the right hand, turn it over sidewise and return it face up to dealing position. Point to the card visible on the face, then to the table top, following this action with your eyes as you state, *"We'll place this card face down here on the table."*



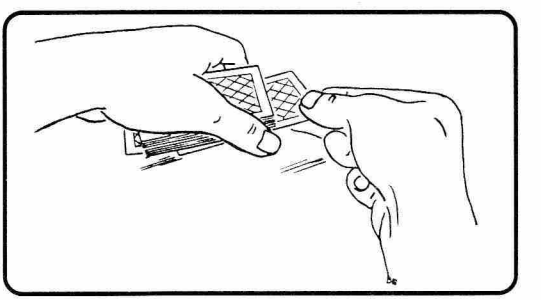
As soon as you finish saying this, look at the spectators, decreasing their attention on the deck while you turn the left hand palm down. Move the left index finger next to the middle finger and against the outer left corner of the deck, the outer phalanx contacting the side of the deck. The deck itself rests on the pads of the left middle, ring and little fingers. This brings the lower left side of the deck in contact with the outer joint of the middle, ring and little fingers. The illustration shows a transparent view from the front.

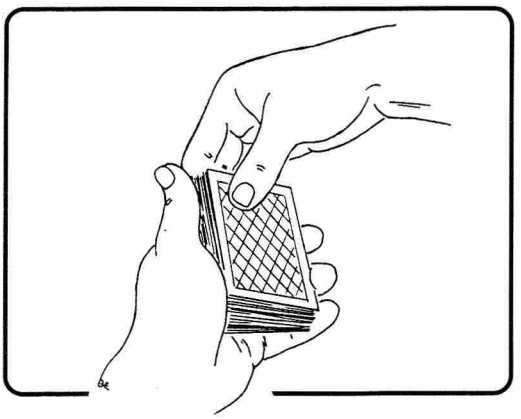


As you look at the spectators, move the left middle, ring and little fingers as a unit a full half inch back and to the left. This slides the face card back in a slightly diagonal path. Do not move the thumb and index finger, which provide a counter pressure to keep the rest of the deck perfectly squared. This illustration shows a view from below.



While moving the right hand toward the deck, shift your gaze from the spectators to your hands. Place the pad of the right middle finger on the exposed index of the card above the face card and pull this card forward, grasping it between the right thumb and middle finger. The illustration shows an exposed view—in actual practice the projecting card would not be visible.





As the card is being placed on the table by the right hand, move the left middle, ring and little fingers back to their starting positions, carrying the card on the face of the deck with them. Once the drawn card is on the table, grasp the deck briefly in the right hand at the outer end and replace it face down into left-hand dealing position. Any residual misalignment of the face card can be corrected at this time by squaring the deck.

You can also return the deck to face-down left-hand dealing position without involving the right hand, by moving the left thumb to the left along the top of the deck, then working the left fingers underneath the deck to its right side.

Check Points

1. Keep the left index finger at the outer left corner of the deck. Do not move it, even as you execute the glide.
2. Move the middle, ring and little fingers as a unit and not individually. This renders the movement virtually invisible to even a keenly observant spectator.
3. The slightly diagonal glide not only minimizes the distance the face card must move, but prevents the spectators on the right from seeing any telltale projecting edge.
4. Pay close attention to the timing: The face card is moved before the right hand reaches under the deck and while you are still looking at the spectators.
5. If more than one card slides back with the face card during the glide it is probably due to poor quality cards; use new, clean cards that slide easily. The rest of the deck is held in check by the left thumb and index finger.
6. If the cards above the substituted card slide forward as it is drawn off the deck, this is not a problem, since this could actually happen as a result of the action you are simulating.

TRICKS WITH THE GLIDE

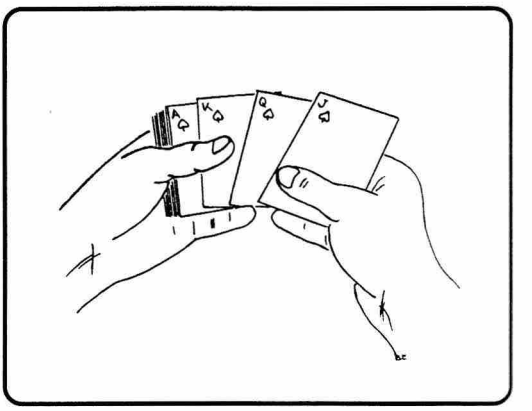
The Acrobat Family

Effect

This is my presentation for a classic of modern card magic, Edward Marlo's "Elevator Cards".[28] The Jack, Queen, King and Ace of Spades are placed face down in a row on the table. One after another they execute wonderful feats of ever increasing difficulty, always reappearing in unsuspected places.

Construction, Management and Script

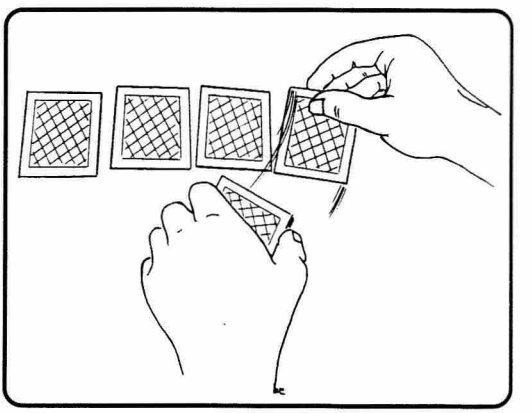
Spread the deck face up between your hands and cut it to bring the Ace of Clubs to the face. Spread through the cards again and outjog the Jack, Queen, King and Ace of Spades, so that they project halfway from the spread. With your right hand, remove these four cards from the spread and place them on the face of the squared deck, with the Jack at the face, followed by the Queen, then the King and finally the Ace. Spread the first three cards to display the four spades, while keeping the ace of clubs hidden.



"Ladies and Gentleman, may I introduce you to the deck's premier family of acrobats. Each member has mastered an artistic feat of increasing difficulty. The Jack is a beginner, the Queen is more advanced, the King is a professional, and the Ace, as you might suspect, is an absolute master."

The goal of this introduction is twofold: first, by personifying the cards you create greater interest in the effect; and second, the order of the cards is reinforced for the spectators.

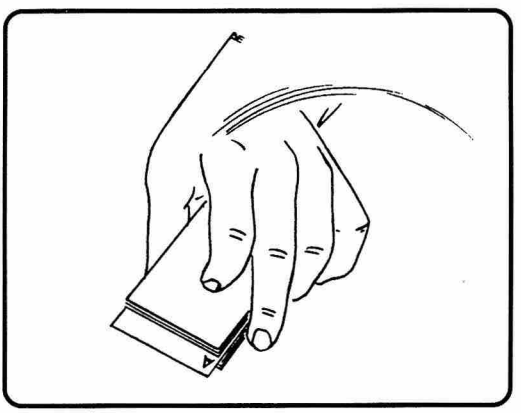
Square the face-up deck and hold it in left-hand dealing position. Tap the Jack with your right index finger, then turn the left hand palm down, automatically bringing it into glide position. Apparently place the Jack on the table—but actually glide it back and set down the Queen in its place. Keep the Jack in its offset position as you deal the next three cards above it into a face-down row to the right of the Queen. As each card is dealt, repeat the name of the card supposedly being placed on the table.



"Let's begin with a simple leap from the bottom to the top. Acrobats call this feat a 'salto mortale'—the fatal leap. This is something the Jack already does really well." As you say this, casually overhand shuffle the deck, bringing the Jack from the bottom to the top. Then set the deck face down on the leftmost card in the four-card row. Riffle the ends of the deck and with a showmanly gesture show that the Jack has jumped to the top. (In Chapter 12, which is devoted to flourishes, you will learn several pretty ways of displaying the top card, one of which you may wish to add here to embellish the effect.)

"The Queen will demonstrate the difficult two-phase salto mortale to the bottom." Pick up the "Queen" (which is actually the King) from the row and place it on top of the deck, which you then take into right-hand end grip. Riffle your left thumb down the left side of the deck—and slide the bottom card out to the left, using the left middle and ring fingers, which you then close to flip the card over sidewise on the hand, revealing the Queen. Place the Queen face up on the table next to the face-up Jack.

"The King, being an expert, goes in the center, turns a one-and-a-half pirouette, then leaps to the top with a two-phase salto mortale with a half twist." Turn the deck face up and insert the third card of the row face down in the center. Snap your fingers, turn the deck face down, then turn the top card face up. (In Chapter 26 of *Volume 2* you will encounter the "Top-card Turnover IV", which fits particularly well at this point in our acrobatics.) Place the King face up on the table next to the previous two face-up cards. The face-up Jack, Queen and King silently serve to reinforce the identity of the fourth face-down card, presumed to be the Ace.



"And finally, the Ace of the acrobat family! I place it in the approximate center of the deck." Indeed, do so with the remaining face-down card of the row, and leave it projecting for about half an inch from the outer end. *"The Ace has incredible talents."* As you say this, turn the wrist to bring the deck face up, exposing the outer index of a black Ace, which the spectators will assume to be the Ace of Spades, though it is actually the Ace of Clubs. The illustration shows their view from the front.

Turn the deck face down and snap your right fingers. *"Viola! The only three-phase salto mortale in the world, executed by the Ace of Spades in a deck of cards!"* Ribbon spread the deck face down on the table to reveal the face-up Ace of Spades in the center—and accept your applause.

The Coué Test

Effect

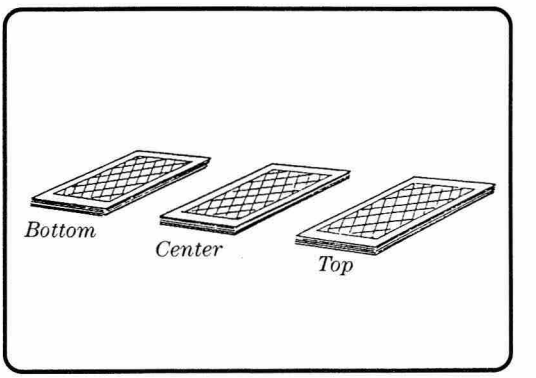
The performer apparently finds the wrong card, but manages to correct his mistake in a surprising manner. This trick, in which the magician amazes the spectators by righting a wrong, is extremely effective in making an audience sit up and take notice. The plot, a popular standard of card magic for many years, was invented by the Spanish magician Partagas.[29] The version of the trick offered here is a variant handling of one Hugard and Braue called "Design for Laughter".[30]

Construction, Management and Script

Control the chosen card to the top of the deck, then overhand shuffle it to the bottom. Perform a false cut and set the deck face down in front of the spectators. For the apparent mistake to be effective later, it is important for everyone in the audience to know the identity of the chosen card.

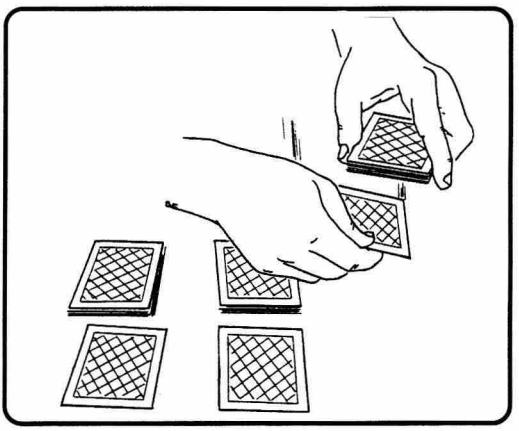
"Allow me to administer the Coué psychotest to you. As you may know, Emil Coué was a French physician who developed a treatment based on autosuggestion. You will find your card yourself, with the help of his method." Take the deck, briefly riffle one end toward the spectator, then replace the deck on the table, taking care all the while not to expose the bottom card. *"Your subconscious mind has now registered the position of your card in the deck. Cut the deck into three packets while you say, 'I am absolutely certain that this is my card.'"*

The spectator follows your instructions, cutting the deck into three packets while repeating the above suggestion with mock seriousness before each cut. During the dividing of the deck, secretly observe where the bottom portion is placed, as the bottom card of this packet is the spectator's chosen card. For this explanation we will assume that the spectator cuts the cards from your left to right, which places the bottom packet on the left.

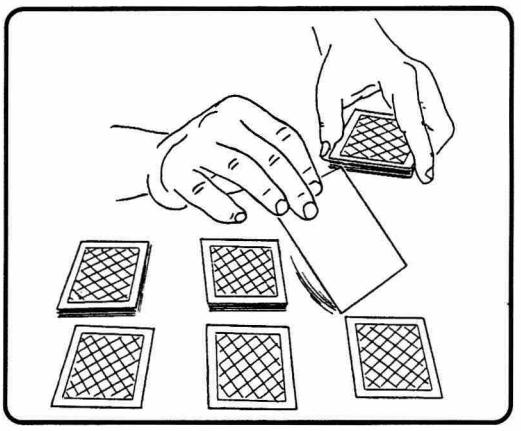


"Let's see how you've done. Well, apparently it didn't work with the first card." Pick up the packet on your right in right-hand end grip and turn the hand palm up to display the face card. Place the packet face up in left-hand dealing position, then turn the left hand palm down and grasp the bottom card with the right fingers to place it face down on the table. In doing this you simulate the action of a glide without carrying one out. This serves to familiarize the audience with this handling.

Repeat this procedure with the face card of the middle packet, which again is not the spectator's card. *"Please don't say anything, but I am quite certain that this is not your card either."* These words serve to anticipate the next phase, preventing any premature reaction from the audience when they see the chosen card.



Finally take the third packet and display the face card, which *is* the chosen card. *"The test seems to have failed—this is not the card you chose either."* Using the same actions as before, apparently place this card beside the other two, but actually execute the glide with the spectator's card and place an indifferent card onto the table. (This illustration and the next show the audience's view.)



Immediately remove the next indifferent card from above the still offset selection and use it to indicate the three tabled cards: *"None of these three cards is the card you chose."* Hold the indifferent card with its face "inadvertently" visible to the audience. Then place this card on the face of the left-hand packet and reassemble the deck, setting the other two packets on top of the left hand's cards. The spectator's card is now second from the bottom.

Look at the spectators and explain: *"The Coué test failed. Perhaps we'll have more luck with numerology. Name your favorite number between one and ten."* In principle, the spectator could name any number from one to forty-eight—you are holding forty-nine cards—but restricting the choice to less than ten keeps the trick moving briskly. Position the deck for the glide, casually exposing the indifferent card on the face. Let's assume the spectator names the number five. With your right hand, deal the bottom card face down onto the table and casually flash its face in the process, subtly reinforcing the outward honesty of your actions. Glide back the chosen card and deal the next three indifferent cards onto the table. On the count of five take the chosen card and hold it face down in the right hand: *"One, two, three, four and five: the number you chose."*

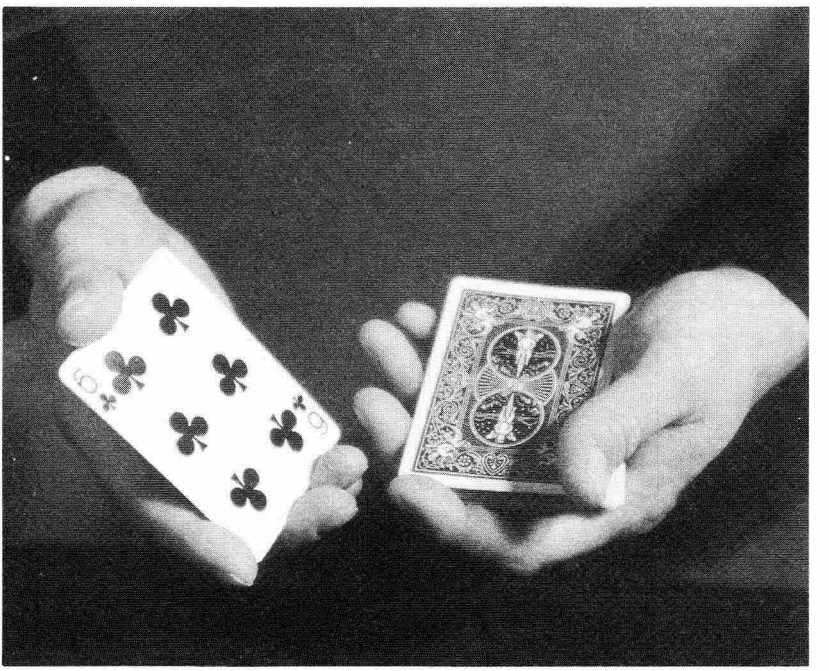
Look confidently at the spectator, who is finally asked to name the chosen card. As soon as you hear it, shift your gaze disconcertedly toward the face-down card on the table that the spectators believe to be the card just named. Look at the face of the card in your hand and ask the spectator, *"Are you sure?"* Pause to let the spectator confirm the card; then slowly revolve the card in your right hand, so that it first faces you, then faces the audience. It is the card chosen by the spectator! You and the rest of the audience can now enjoy watching the spectator who incredulously turns over the tabled card. Who doesn't believe in numerology now?

CHAPTER 9

THE DOUBLE LIFT, PART 1

"Good is better than perfect."

Anonymous



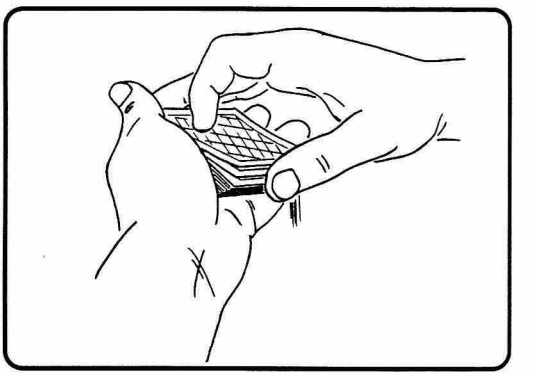
In a double lift, two cards are held squared together and displayed as one apparently single card. In this chapter I will describe two methods that can be used in almost all performing situations.

A double lift may be broken into three stages: First, the preparation, called the *get-ready*; second, the display; and third, the replacement on the deck. Keep these stages in mind as you study the following descriptions.

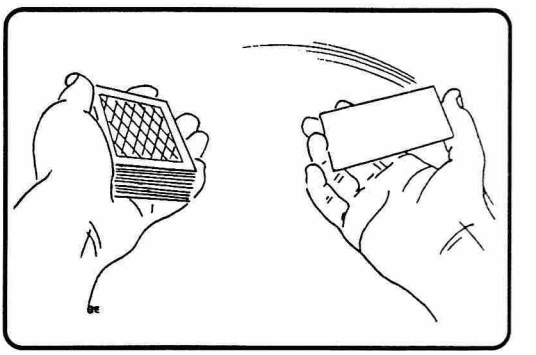
A Double Lift

You can use this method at the start, as it is relatively easy, but later you will use it only in special circumstances, as the handling, if applied repeatedly, would seem unnatural.

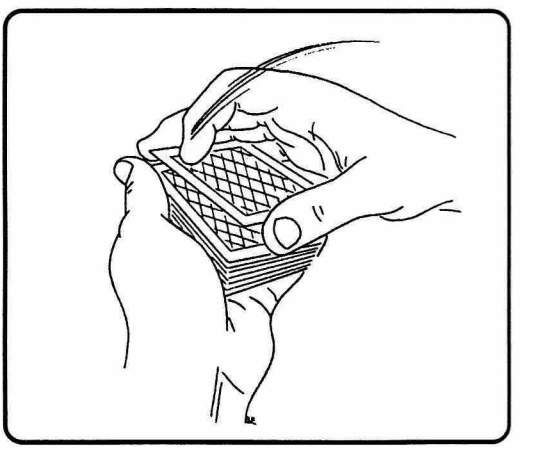
Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position. You now need to form a break under the top two cards. To do this, bring the right hand into end-grip position over the deck and bevel the cards slightly toward you at the upper inner edge. One at a time, catch the inner ends of the top two cards on the pad of your right thumb while your left hand lowers the inner end of the deck a very small distance, so that a left little-finger break can be caught under the second card.



Introduce a delay between the preparation (the get-ready) and the double lift itself; you might perhaps gesture with the right hand or use it to push aside an object on the table. Then resume right-hand end grip and grasp the double card by its ends. Immediately turn the hand clockwise at the wrist to display the face of the card to the spectators. Move the hand slowly but constantly, so that the additional thickness of the card cannot be noticed. It is also wise to buckle the card slightly inward; that is, bow the card so that its face is mildly concave.



Replace the double card face down and square on the deck, freeing the right hand to carry out an action appropriate in the context of the trick. This implicitly justifies the replacement of the card. It might be a simple gesture; for example, you point to the table: *"I'll put the card here and ask you to place your finger on it."* Finally, place the top card—apparently the one just shown—face down on the table, or in a pocket, an envelope, or on the spectator's palm, etc.

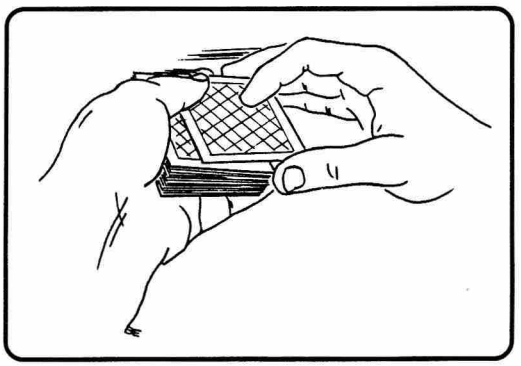


Check Points

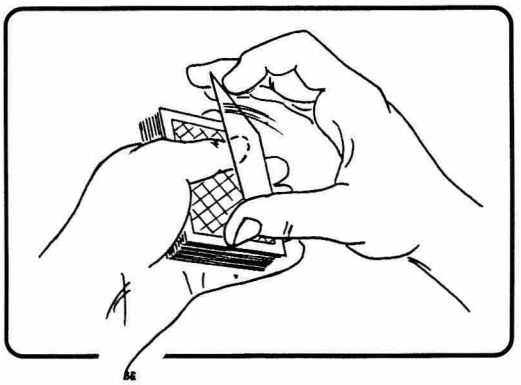
1. Taking the break under the top two cards uses the same technique described under the heading "Little-finger Break Under the Top Card—Two-handed Method", page 29. Rather than *raising* the cards (and creating a ski-jump!), you *lower* the inner end of the deck under the top two cards.
2. Buckling the card lightly inward during the display prevents the double card from accidentally separating at the edges. If you flex the cards inward and release them occasionally during the display, you can create the convincing impression of a single card.

A Double Turnover

In this technique, the double card is turned over and displayed directly on top of the deck; then it is immediately turned down again. One advantage of this method is that even spectators seated on low furniture cannot see the additional thickness of the cards. The double card is constantly in motion, but always under the performer's control, giving you considerable security.

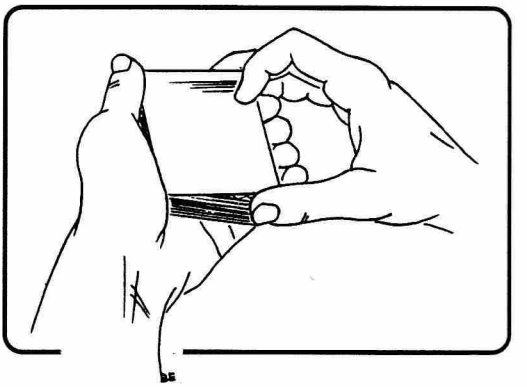


Using the method just described, obtain a left little-finger break under the top two cards. Introduce a delay, as previously described. Then bring the right hand over the deck in end-grip position and grasp both cards between the right thumb and middle finger. Retract the left thumb as though it were preparing to push over the top card, and pull the double card to the right with the right hand, the left thumb moving along with the card. It should look as though you are pushing the card over with the left thumb.



Pull the double card farther to the right, until its left side reaches the right side of the deck. Then press the left thumb lightly against the back of the double card, causing it to pivot face up on the deck along the axis formed by the right thumb and middle finger.

As soon as the double card is face up, square it with the deck by moving the right thumb and middle fingers to the right along their respective ends of the cards. Just prior to this, however, take a left little-finger break under the double card. With your right hand, draw attention to the face-up card, then turn both cards face down by repeating the actions just described.



TRICKS WITH A DOUBLE LIFT

Rise and Sway

This trick is based on an idea of the personable Swiss magician, Sven Maro, alias Fritz Moser.[31] It is a logical and effective variation of a classic effect.

Effect

Two cards inexplicably change places. To do so, one card apparently travels from the center of the deck to the top, then changes places with the other card, which a spectator has held pressed against the table top the entire time.

Construction, Management and Script

Take back the deck, which a spectator has just shuffled, and execute a double lift. Let's assume the audience sees the King of Hearts. Put one spectator in charge of remembering this card. Turn both cards face down on the deck and place the top card—an indifferent one—face down on the table. To the spectators, you have displayed, then tabled the King of Hearts.

Execute a second double lift. Let's assume that this time you display the Six of Spades. Replace the double card face down on the deck and deal the top card face down on the table in front of someone. Ask this person to place a finger on the back of the card. The spectators will think this is the Six of Spades, when in fact it is the King of Hearts.

Pick up the first tabled card. *"I will place the..."*—hesitate, then look at the face of the indifferent card as though you had forgotten the name of the first card you set aside, and continue—*"...King of Hearts somewhere in the center of the deck."* Insert the presumed King of Hearts halfway into the deck from the outer end. *"The King, being a most important card, doesn't stay in the deck long, but rises immediately to the top."* Push the card all the way into the deck, riffle the outer end from bottom to top, then take the top card in the right hand, without showing its face. *"And when I snap it, it changes places with the card under your fingers."* Turn the card face up and show the Six of Spades. The spectator turns over the guarded card on the table and finds, to everyone's surprise but yours, the King of Hearts.

Final Note

Naturally, it is best if the two cards displayed contrast well with each other. In taking the shuffled deck from the spectator and proceeding directly with the effect, there is no guarantee of such a contrast. However, you can quickly look through the deck and cut a contrasting pair to positions second and third from the top without diminishing the effectiveness of the trick.

A Card in Hand

This trick was a favorite of the influential American mentalist, Theodore Annemann, who died much too young.[32] Don't be deceived by the simplicity of the procedure, as its effectiveness with a lay audience leaves nothing to be desired.

Effect

The spectator chooses a card, which is then shuffled back into the deck. The performer shows another card, which the spectator freely inserts halfway into the deck, in an attempt to locate the chosen card. Unfortunately, the performer's magical powers seem to have failed. But ultimately, the card held by the spectator is found to have changed into the chosen card!

Construction, Management and Script

Have a card chosen and remembered. Let's say it is the Jack of Hearts. Have the card returned to the deck and secretly control it to the top.

Execute a double turnover to display an indifferent card apparently on top of the deck; for example, the Ten of Spades. *"This card is going to help you to find your own card again. That makes more sense than me finding it, since I don't even know the name of your card, let alone where it is in the deck."* Turn toward the spectator who chose the card, simultaneously turning the double card face down on the deck and handing the spectator the top card (the selection!).

Have the spectator hold this card between a thumb (on the back) and index finger (on the face). Next ask that this card be inserted halfway into the deck at the location the spectator thinks the chosen card will be found. During this procedure, caution the spectator not to release the "locator card". Slowly riffle the front end of the deck to facilitate the insertion. As soon as the card has been pushed in, separate the deck at that location and, with your right hand, display the face card of the upper half. *"Is that your card? No? There is one other possibility: Perhaps it is the card underneath."* Use the right hand's packet to flip the top card of the left hand's packet sidewise and face up. *"What? That's not your card either? Well, then, you will just have to perform a bit of magic."*

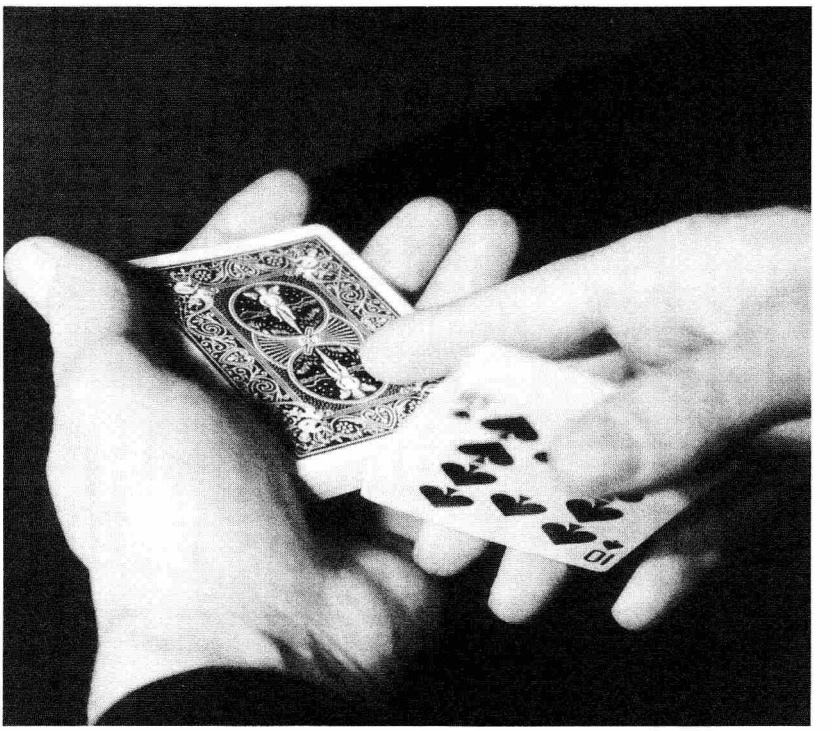
Set the deck aside and ask your helper to name the chosen card, then to blow on the back of the indicator card. When the spectator slowly turns the card over and shows it to everyone, no one will look on it with more surprise than the person who has been holding it the entire time!

CHAPTER 10

THE KEY CARD

"All things are difficult until they become easy."

Persian proverb



A *key card* is a card that leads the performer to the card a spectator has chosen and replaced in the deck. The key card may be directly above or below the chosen card, or it may be a known distance away from it. Actually, you have already been exposed to the key-card concept when you learned the "whoops!" control (page 64).

Simply stated, the key card allows you to locate the spectator's card and learn its identity. If necessary, the chosen card can then be controlled to a specific location in the deck, using the techniques described in Chapter 4.

The handling of a key card may be divided into three phases:

First, identifying the key card. This can be accomplished using a glimpse. Two methods of glimpsing key cards will be taught in this chapter, and another in the next (see page 157). More glimpses will be found in Chapter 23 (*Volume 2*). This phase is eliminated if you are working with a key card that can be located by touch (a short, long or thick card, for example).

Second, setting the key card. This concerns placing the key card above, below or at a known distance from the chosen card.

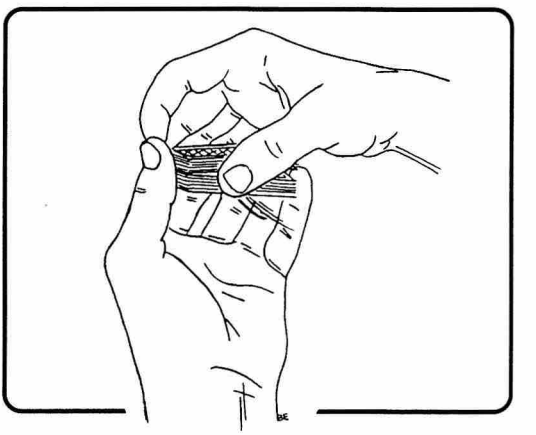
Third, the location, identification and possible control of the chosen card. Knowing the key card and its positional relationship to the chosen card allows you to find the chosen card and place it wherever you desire it in the deck.

Key-card Placement

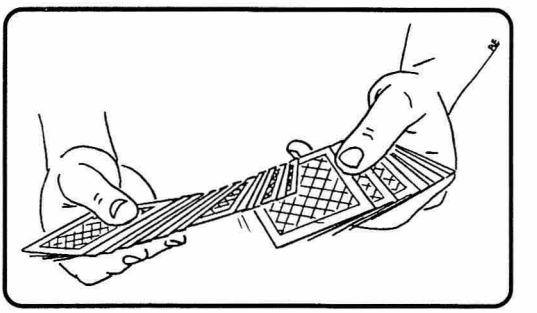
The following techniques place the key card above or below the spectator's card. We assume in all cases that the identity of the key card is known. Detailed methods for obtaining this knowledge are given in Chapter 23.

The Key Card in a Hand-to-hand Spread

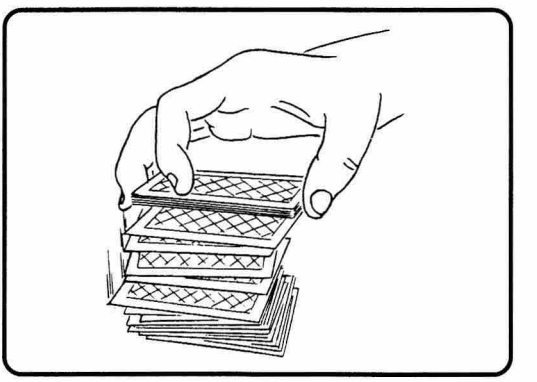
The key card is on top of the deck. Spread the deck between your hands and have a spectator remove and look at a card. As the spectator notes the card, close the spread and begin an overhand shuffle, using the left thumb to pull off about half the deck in the first shuffle action. Injog the next card and shuffle off. Form a break below the injogged card and adjust the deck to left-hand dealing position. (See Check Point 2.)



The key card is just under the break. Spread the cards between your hands and ask the spectator to return the chosen card to the deck. As soon as you come to the key card, place the pads of your right middle, ring and little fingers onto the exposed right side of the face of the card resting just above the key card. Spread over three or four cards more, then lift all the cards above the key card about an inch. Open the spread only at the outer end for the return of the selection (the illustration shows the spectators' view).



When the spectator replaces the chosen card, square the deck at the fingertips, or dribble the cards from hand to hand or onto the table, emphasizing the fairness of the procedure. If the spectator, for whatever reason, does not return the card to the location offered, visually count the cards between the key card and the selection and remember this for the subsequent location.

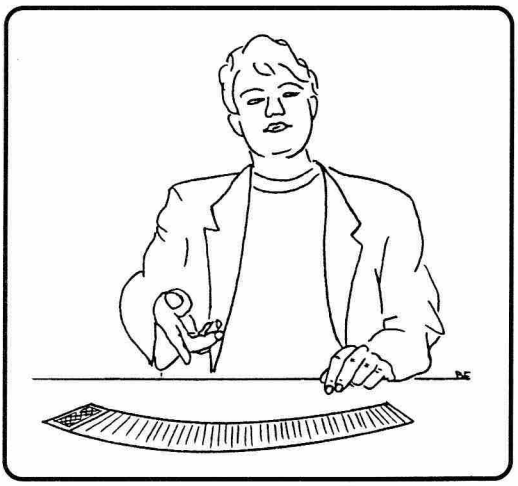


Check Points

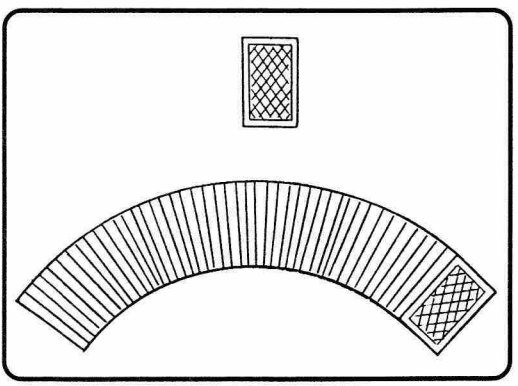
1. When forming a break above the key card, in preparation for the return of the selection, it can be very disarming to delay the formation of the break. This delay strategy will be taught in connection with the classic force. See page 217.
2. When you open the spread for the spectator to replace the card, it should open only at the outer end. The cards remain together at the inner end. This helps to avoid the impression that the spread is split in two. In most cases, the spectator will swear the card was replaced with complete freedom. This is what makes the technique so convincing.

Key Card in a Ribbon Spread

In this advanced and extremely convincing method, the spectator removes a card from a tabled ribbon spread and apparently replaces it freely in the spread. Nevertheless, your key card is directly above the chosen card.

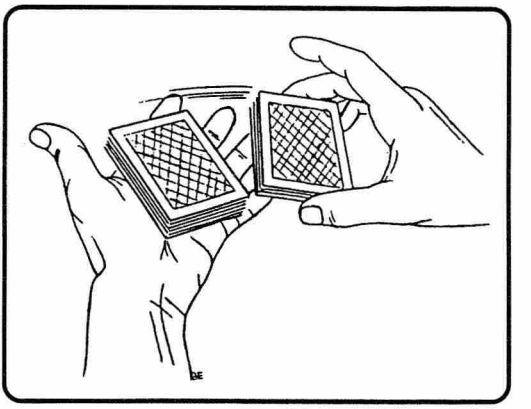


Your key card is on the bottom of the deck. Ribbon spread the cards on the table from left to right to have one chosen. Lean back in a passive posture, gesturing toward the center of the spread. Leaning back emphasizes the distance between you and the cards, and physically communicates your lack of influence over them. Gesturing toward the center of the spread is an important element in the structure of this control and is repeated several times. The illustration shows a view from the front.

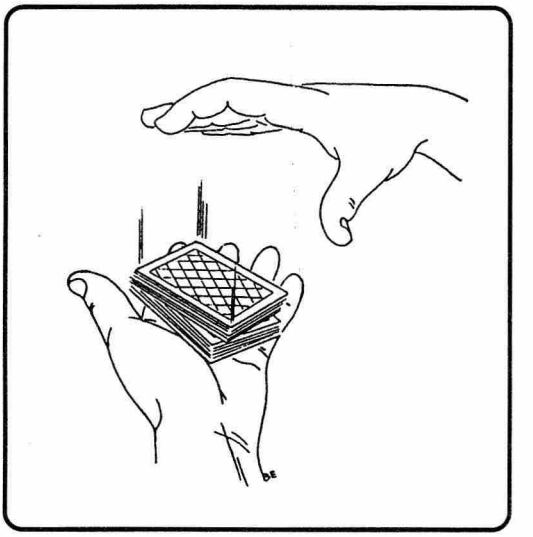


Stop the spectator as soon as a card has been pulled from the spread. Still leaning back (emphasizing your distance and nonparticipation), ask if the spectator would like to change this card for another. It makes no difference if the card is exchanged or not. Ultimately, a single card lies face down in front of the ribbon spread. The preceding serves to reinforce this image as strongly as possible in the minds of the spectators. They will remember this later.

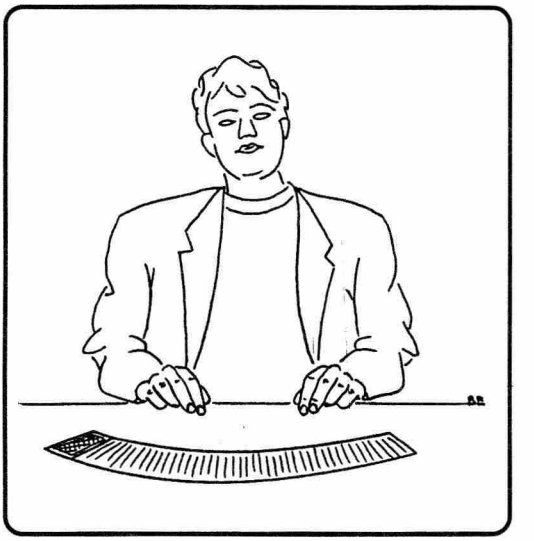
Ask the spectator to note the card. Keep your distance from the rest of the deck until the spectators' attention has shifted to the chosen card. Only then do you reassemble the deck, holding it face down in left-hand dealing position. Take the deck into right-hand end grip and swing cut the upper half into your left hand. Lower and extend this hand for the replacement of the spectator's card. Note the open position of the left hand, expressing fairness and candor.



As soon as the chosen card has been replaced, clearly and deliberately drop the right hand's cards onto the left hand's packet from a height of about eight inches. This places the key card directly above the chosen card. The replacement of the chosen card is carried out with a swifter rhythm than its selection, providing less time for it to register visually, and emphasizing only that the card is placed in the center of the deck without the slightest manipulation.



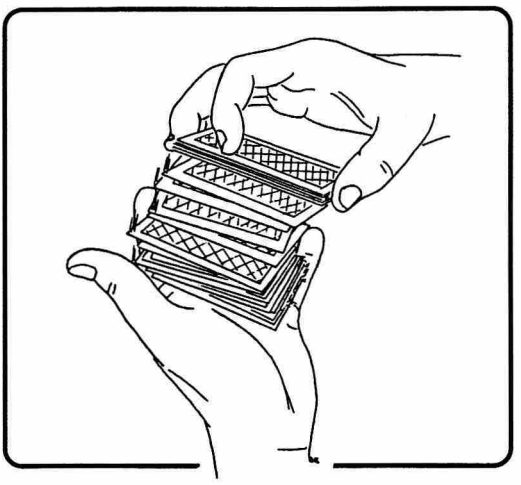
Square the deck and ribbon spread it on the table from left to right, just as you did prior to the selection. Lean back, again emphasizing your distance from the cards, and allow the image of the ribbon spread to register in the spectators' minds. The next remarks give time for this and remind the spectators of what has happened so far: *"You freely removed a card from the deck..."*—mimic removing a card from the center of the spread and nod your head—*"...showed it to everyone..."*—pretend to show a card to the audience and nod your head—*"...and finally replaced it in the deck..."*—pretend to replace the imaginary card into the center of the spread and nod your head again. After each statement, you nod your head and wait for the spectator's acknowledgment. You can now pick up the deck, then locate and control the spectator's card using one of the methods described below.



Check Points

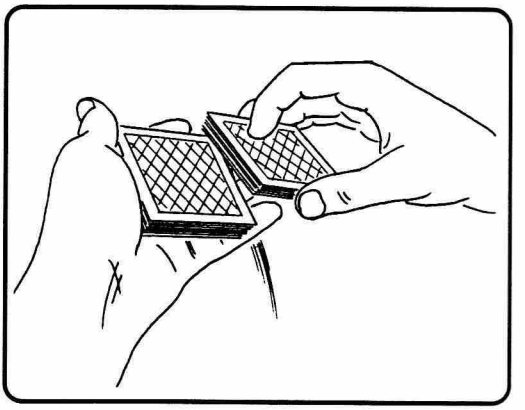
1. In this description, I have especially stressed timing: emphasized and unemphasized moments, separated by pauses. (The Italian-American magician Slydini was a master in the application of this technique.) I have also emphasized the duration of the various steps relative to the entire procedure. You must devote more time to those elements that you want the spectators to remember, taking a more active stance. On the other hand, if you want a spectator to forget something, devote less time to it and take a passive or neutral stance. This makes it difficult for anyone to reconstruct what has happened, since they tend to remember only what you have emphasized.
2. Nodding the head is an old sales technique and subliminally invites the spectator to confirm your statements. This is demonstrated expertly by the Viennese magician Magic Christian in his lectures.
3. When you summarize the procedure at the end, you do so by making three statements. The first two are true and will be willingly confirmed by the spectator, both internally and verbally. This developes an atmosphere of rapport, making it difficult for the spectator to deny subsequent statements, provided they are not obviously false. When you say, "*...and finally replaced it in the deck...*", you are making a statement that is only partly true, but one that will not be questioned after the two completely correct statements that have just preceded it. Although it is true that the card is in the center of the deck, the spectator placed it where you wanted it and not—as implied by your pantomimed actions—in the center of a ribbon spread on the table. This deliberately and carefully crafted combination of verbal and physical suggestions makes the control of the card puzzling even to experts.

Glimpse and Placement

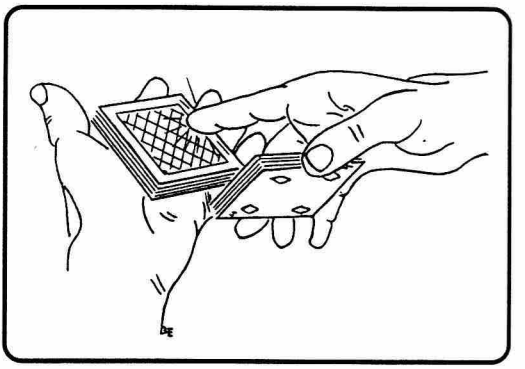


Hold the deck in open dealing position in the left hand. Then grasp the cards in right-hand end grip and dribble them onto the left palm. The spectator is instructed to call *stop* at any time as you dribble the cards again. Square the cards and begin the second dribble, halting the instant the spectator calls *stop*.

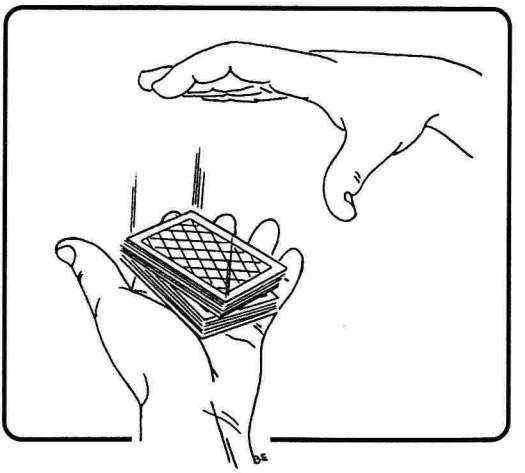
Look at the spectator: *"Here? Good. There are now two possible choices: Do you want this card or this one here?"* As soon as you say, *"There are now two possible choices,"* every spectator will understand that you mean either the lowest card of the right hand's packet or the top card of the left hand's. Pause for two to three seconds, giving the spectators time to make this realization. You then say, *"Do you want this card..."*, as you tap your left middle finger against the face of the bottom card of the right hand's packet without showing it.



This draws the spectators' attention to the right hand's packet. Pause. Automatically the spectators will keep thinking and anticipate your next statement—after all, you mentioned two possible choices. During the pause their attention will automatically shift to the left hand's packet. Fulfill their expectations by tapping your right forefinger on the top card of that packet: *"...or this one here?"* In tapping the top card, the right hand tilts forward for one second or less. This brings its packet to a slightly inclined position, so that you can glimpse the bottom card.



Immediately bring the right hand's packet back to a horizontal position and look at the spectator. You have just glimpsed your key card. If the spectator wants the lower card of the right hand's packet, you already know its name! Alternatively, if the other card is desired, turn your head to one side and give the spectator the top card of the left hand's packet, asking that it be noted, then replaced on the packet. Drop the right hand's cards onto the left hand's packet, turning your head back and looking at the deck. This draws everyone's attention to it as you carefully and fairly square the cards at the fingertips. The key card now lies directly above the chosen card.



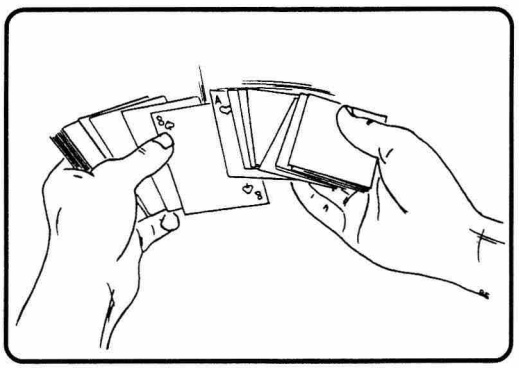
Check Points

1. Both packets are held horizontally and below eye level throughout, with the exception of the brief moment necessary for the glimpse.
2. The glimpse is easier if you hold both packets somewhat farther from your body than normal. The right hand's packet now need be tipped only slightly to allow you a quick and inconspicuous glimpse of the bottom card.
3. Don't forget to turn your head aside during the selection. This act adds considerably to the deception.

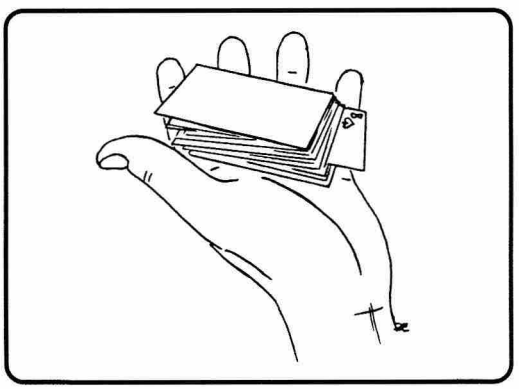
Location, Identification and Control with a Key Card

These techniques permit you to identify the spectator's card (what is the name of the card?) and to locate it (where is it?). After this, the selection can be controlled to the top, the bottom or elsewhere in the deck.

Control in a Hand-to-hand Spread

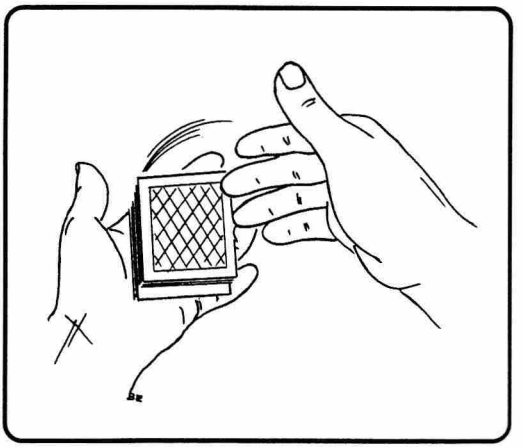


Assume the key card is the Eight of Spades and that it lies above the chosen card, the Ace of Hearts, in the face-down deck. Spread the cards face up between your hands. When you come to the Eight of Spades, place your left thumb on its face to pull it inward, so that it is injogged about an inch in the spread. (The right ring and little fingers can be used under spread to injog this card, if you prefer. See page 31 for details.)



Spread through the rest of the deck, then push the cards together in the left hand. The Eight of Spades projects from the inner end of the unsquared deck, which lies face up in open dealing position on the left hand.

With your right hand, grasp the deck at its right side and flip it over sidewise to bring it face down in the left hand. This does not affect the status of the injogged card. Take a break below the injogged card (see page 31, "Forming a Little-finger Break Under Multiple Cards"), then overhand shuffle to the break and throw the rest on top. This brings the chosen card, the Ace of Hearts, to the top. If necessary, it can then be shuffled to the bottom.

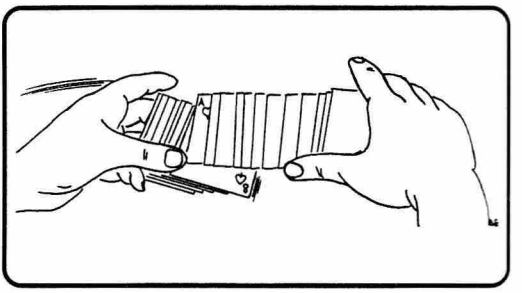


Check Points

1. The pretext for spreading the cards face up is dictated by the context of the particular trick. For example, you might need to find and remove the four Aces, eliminate the Joker or simply show that the deck has fifty-two cards.
2. After turning the deck face down, should the injog, due to the unsquared status of the cards, not be clearly visible, a gentle shake of the wrist, sending the cards forward against the left forefinger, will be found helpful.

Tabled Ribbon Spread Control

Ribbon spread the deck face up from left to right on the table. The indices face you and facilitate finding the key card. The card next to it is the chosen card. Push the cards together. In doing so, place your left thumb on the left side of the chosen card (or the one above it) and injog it slightly. Proceed as just described in "Control in a Hand-to-hand Spread" to place the card where you need it.



Check Points

1. Should the card not be clearly visible, tap the spread from left to right with your hand, further spreading the cards.
2. Use both hands to gather the cards, as shown in the illustration. This is more natural and it helps to draw attention from the left hand's action.

TIP: Once you have mastered the spread cull in Chapter 13 (page 187), you will use it almost exclusively when you need to control cards located with a key card.

Further Thoughts on the Key Card

Shuffling with a Key Card

If you introduce this refinement, it looks as though you have thoroughly shuffled the deck after the placement of the key card. Nevertheless, both cards remain together, permitting a successful location later.

The key card lies above the chosen card. Generally, both are near the center of the deck. If not, it is only necessary to have a good idea of where they are.

Pick up the deck and begin an overhand shuffle. Shuffle off less than half the deck with just a few throws. As you approach the estimated location of the key card, throw a block of cards large enough to include the key card and the chosen card; then shuffle off the rest of the deck. The relative positions of the key card and chosen card are unaltered.

Letting the Spectator Shuffle with a Key Card

This subtlety can be introduced whenever you perform for a particularly skeptical audience or for fellow magicians. Thanks to a little-known fact, you can have a spectator shuffle the deck after your key card is placed.

After positioning the key card next to the selection, give the deck to a spectator to shuffle, and mime the actions of an overhand shuffle. This assures that the spectator will shuffle in that fashion.

Laymen shuffle with four to five shuffle actions. It is unlikely for the key card to become separated from the chosen card during this. To prevent more than one shuffle, extend your palm-up left hand as soon as the shuffle begins, with the request, *"And please cut the deck* once *on my palm."* Emphasize *once* as though this had some special meaning. The request diverts the spectator from a second shuffle, since there is now a second instruction to be followed.

TRICKS WITH A KEY CARD

A Phenomenal Memory

A version of this trick was shown to me by the Spanish card genius Juan Tamariz. He, in turn, had seen it performed in Las Vegas by Jimmy Grippo.[33] Grippo's method is a wonderfully simple solution to an effect called "Moe's Move a Card" by the American enigma, "Moe" Seidenstein.[34] Perform this trick as though it were really a feat of prodigious memory and, for those not in the know, no other explanation is possible.

Effect

The performer shuffles a chosen card back into the deck, then ribbon spreads it face up on the table. He stares at the card spread for fifteen seconds, after which he turns away. The spectator then moves the chosen card from its location in the spread to another part of the spread. The performer looks at the cards again and notes the location from which the card was removed. Finally he divines and locates the chosen card.

Construction, Management and Script

This is most effective when performed after a discussion of memory. Of course, you can always introduce the topic yourself: *"Ladies and gentlemen, I would now like to offer, not a card trick, but a feat of memory. As is well known, a good memory requires three things: intelligence, talent and... ummmm... I can't remember the third! It doesn't matter. Please take a card from the deck."* Here use the method explained under "Key Card in a Hand-to-hand Spread" to have a card selected and replaced in the deck. Briefly shuffle the deck ("Shuffling with a Key Card") and have a spectator give the cards a complete cut.

Ribbon spread the deck face up from left to right on the table as you explain, *"I will now attempt to memorize the order of the cards. And in less than fifteen seconds!"* Someone with a stop watch or a watch with a second hand is appointed "time keeper". This spectator calls out *"Ready, set, go!"* for you to start your study of the spread.

Now you must act as though you really are memorizing the order of the cards. Stare at them and move your lips, mumbling the names of some of the cards. Also touch a few of them with the tip of your right forefinger, moving from left to right, to reinforce the impression that you are noting their order. In fact, you are looking for your key card and noting the card to its left, which is the spectator's card. Here are a few convincing touches given by Juan Tamariz: Now and then go back in the spread, as though double checking certain combinations. If possible, note two or three cards lying together. When you reach the key card, remember the two or three cards to the left of the chosen card, as well as the chosen card itself—you will recite them later from memory. Be sure to look over the entire spread within the fifteen-second limit you have imposed on yourself. If the key card is not at the very end of the spread, you can claim that you didn't have time to memorize the last few cards, but you'll take a chance that the chosen card is not among them.

As soon as the time keeper tells you your time is up, look upward with relief—as though you have just completed an extremely difficult act of memorization. Ask the spectator to take the chosen card from the spread and replace it in any other part of the spread, making sure that the selection is the only one moved. Turn away and do whatever you can to convince the audience that you cannot see the spectator's actions. You may want to have a second spectator closely watch your eyes, to ensure this. Before you turn back, have the spectator straighten the cards in the spread, so that you cannot detect the locations from which the card was removed or reinserted.

You now begin to build toward the climax. As you turn around, casually look at the spread and note the top three or four cards. Looking at the spectator, you say, *"I will try to remember the order of the cards and to find the only card out of place. Let's see, it started with the Ace of Hearts, the Seven of Clubs, the Three of Spades..."* These cards are the ones you have just noted. Now turn your attention to the spread and remark, more to yourself than to the audience, *"Yes, that's right."* Now begin to go through the cards quickly, as though recalling them from memory. When you come to the block of two or three cards that you memorized previously, look up again and recite their names out loud, *"Nine of Hearts, Ace of Clubs..."* Naturally, while going through the cards now you can spontaneously note several cards in a sequence, look up and name them as though they were memorized earlier. Don't exaggerate, but try to act as you would if you really had memorized the order of the cards. By now you'll have located the chosen card. If it is placed in the spread before the key card, pass over it but hesitate slightly, as though something seems out of place. If you reach the key card first, hesitate, look up and recite the cards before and after the key card. Look again at these cards, and call out suddenly, *"Hold it, a card is missing here!"* Go to the place in the spread where the chosen card is located and stare for a few seconds at that area. Then announce, *"Here there is one card too many. It is the King of Hearts—and that is the card you moved!"*

Final Notes

1. Recently, on a popular German television game show, one contestant successfully memorized five shuffled decks in thirty minutes. You can use this incident to create a topical presentation for this trick, in which you will, of course, point out that you only take fifteen seconds to do the job.
2. The same presentation may be used if the chosen card is simply forced on the spectator. In that case, a key card is not necessary and the spectator can shuffle the deck. As long as you don't forget the force card, nothing can go wrong.
3. Performed properly, many spectators will be convinced that what they have seen really is a feat of memory. Don't disillusion them.

Your Number—Your Card

This is said to have been one of the pet effects of the famous American magician Paul Rosini.[35] Rosini particularly enjoyed performing it for fellow magicians, who were invariably baffled by it. I am convinced that you will have a similar experience once you learn the secret and apply it with understanding.

Effect

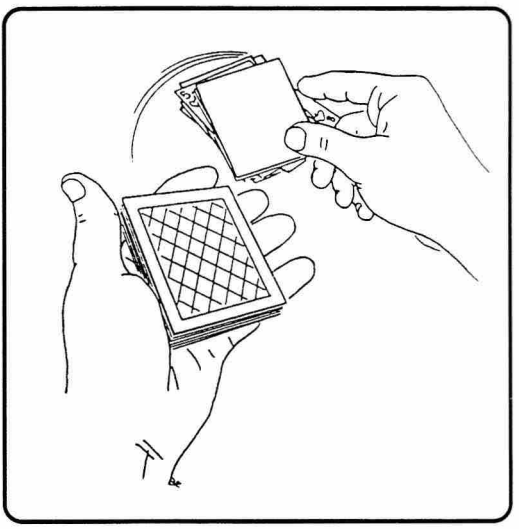
The magician divines a card merely thought of by someone. That person shuffles the deck before and after thinking of the card—and in doing so contributes to an apparently impossible occurrence.

Construction, Management and Script

Hand the deck to someone with the request that the cards be thoroughly shuffled and cut. Once this is done, the spectator is asked to set the deck on the table and cut it into four approximately equal packets. You explain, *"Please think over carefully which of the four packets you wish to pick up."* Following your instructions, the spectator picks up one of the packets and shuffles it again. *"Look at the faces of the cards and think of just one of them. Don't show it to anyone, and hold its image in your mind."* While this task is accomplished, the performer turns away, ensuring that the eventual location will be even more impossible than it already seems. *"And when you have a card in mind, shuffle the packet thoroughly to make sure that your thought-of card is hopelessly lost."* The spectator is then instructed to set the packet back on the table. These starting conditions are very clear and will provoke some head-shaking.

"This trick is so impossible, many people claim afterward that the card was never in the deck. I therefore ask you to confirm that nothing has happened to your card yet." Ask the spectator to pick up the packet containing the thought-of card and to hold it face down. *"Please look at each card individually and remember the position at which your card lies from the top."*

To comply with this, the spectator is carefully told to deal the cards one at a time face up into a pile on the table. Demonstrate what you wish done by picking up one of the other packets, holding it face down in left-hand dealing position, and dealing single cards face up into a pile. Do this with a few cards. As soon as you sense that the spectator knows what to do, reassemble your packet, square it, give it a quick shuffle and replace it on the table. The spectator begins to deal, placing the first card face up on the table. As soon as this card is dealt, turn away, having noted it. Assume it to be the Three of Hearts. This is your key card.



"When you've done this, turn all the cards face down again and return the packet to its place. Please reassemble the deck by gathering the four packets in any order." Turn around as you say this and make sure that the spectator does not accidentally (or purposely!) shuffle the deck.

To negate the thought that you might find the card based on its position, as noted by the spectator (which is exactly what you will do!), have the spectator give the deck a single cut. (In Chapter 17, *Volume 2*, you will learn several false shuffles that retain the entire order of the deck. You can then insert one of those shuffles here, if you like.) You could at this point have several spectators give the deck a cut, as straight cuts will not disturb the relative positions of the key card and the thought-of card.

"I shall now attempt to read your thoughts—of course I'll limit myself to only those concerning your card. Don't worry, I'll keep the rest to myself." Saying this, you spread through the deck with the cards facing you, until you reach your key card, the Three of Hearts. Cut the deck to bring the Three sixth from the face of the deck; then hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position. *"Yes, I think I know your card. By the way, what was the position you noted?"* This, of course, is the key question, and for that very reason you should try to minimize its apparent importance. The spectator's answer determines how you proceed.

From this point on the effect could be renamed "The Trick That Cannot be Explained", *à la* Dai Vernon's famous creation.[36] Naturally, there are several special cases that make the location of the selection so easy as to raise it to the miracle class. If, for example, the spectator says that the card was first in the packet, then you know it is your key card. You can shuffle the deck again and verbally divine the card. If the card was sixth, it is now the face card of the deck; if seventh, it is the top card. If fifth, you can produce it using a glide, if eighth you can show it with a double lift. These special cases happen more often than you might think.

Wherever the card is, you can find it with an overhand shuffle. Assume the spectator said that the card was twelfth. You know immediately that the card is now sixth from the top of the deck. Begin an overhand shuffle by running the first six cards, injogging the seventh and shuffling off the rest of the deck. Form a break below the jog and shuffle off to the break, throwing the remaining six cards on top. The thought-of card is now the top card of the deck.

Once you have the card in the desired position, you can produce it or name it, whichever will create the maximum effect. No matter how you conclude the trick, it is unquestionably one of the best in the think-of-a-card category and provides good opportunities for you to learn to think on your feet.

Final Note

Naturally, there are an infinite number of ways to bring the preceding effect to a proper conclusion. Often I'll bring the thought-of card to the twelfth position from the top and use "The Shamus Card" climax (page 80) to produce the card.

Thot Echo

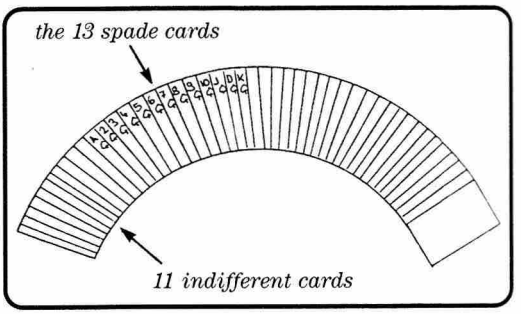
This effect introduces the key-card principle in a very clever way and requires absolutely no technical skill. In other words, it is self-working. It is the creation of the ingenious American amateur magician Sam Schwartz.[37] The trick provides a perfect example of how meticulous construction, a clever script and a brilliant method can thoroughly deceive even the most experienced experts—to say nothing of the public!

Effect

Someone is invited to cut the deck into three approximately equal packets, then select two cards under the fairest conditions, shuffling each packet thoroughly before and after the cards are chosen. It seems impossible for the magician to find the cards under such circumstances—but he does.

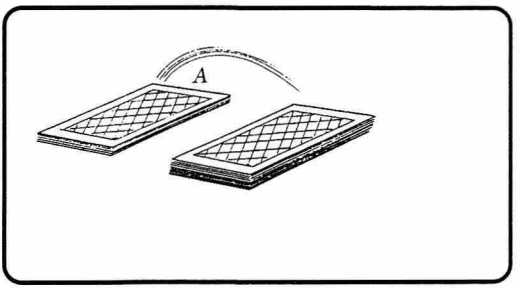
Preparation

Bring the thirteen spade cards to the top of the deck and arrange them in numerical order, with the Ace on top, followed by the Two, then the Three, etc. The King of Spades is thirteenth from the top. Having done this, place eleven indifferent cards on top of this stack, making the Ace of Spades the twelfth card from the top. You are now ready to begin this extraordinary location trick.

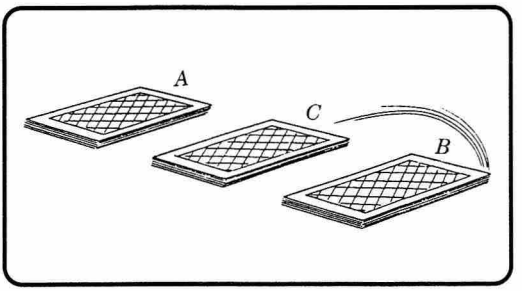


Construction, Management and Script

Place the deck, arranged as described, face down in front of a person who seems able to follow instructions. Ask that about a third of the cards be cut off the top and set down to the (spectator's) right of the deck. In our description, this top third will be referred to as Packet A.



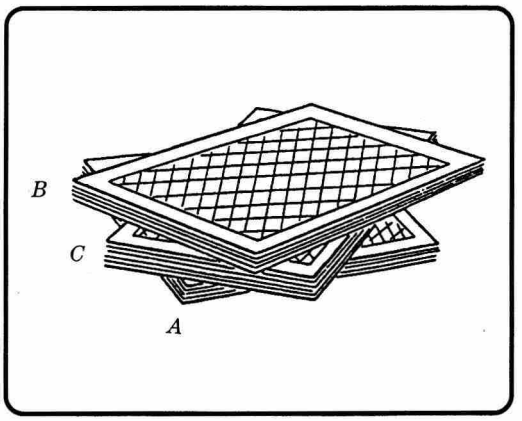
Next the spectator cuts off the upper half from the remainder of the deck and sets it to the left. This, formerly the center third, will be referred to as Packet B, while the original bottom third, now lying between Packets A and B, will be Packet C.



Point to Packet A and explain, *"This is the original top of the deck. If I asked you to look at its top card, you might later claim that I knew it beforehand."* Point to Packet C and continue: *"This is the original bottom of the deck, and it is conceivable that I might know some of its cards."* Finally, point to Packet B. *"But this packet comes from the center of the deck, which you yourself cut, right? So there is no way I could know how many cards it has, or which cards are on the top or the bottom. Am I right?"* Wait for an affirmation after each question. The spectator is then told to look at and remember the top card of Packet B, and to show it to several nearby spectators. Have the card replaced anywhere in Packet B, then ask the spectator to shuffle these cards thoroughly and replace the packet on the table when satisfied that the cards in the packet are hopelessly mixed.

If the spectator cut three approximately equal packets, the lower portion of the spade stock will initially be on top of Packet B. Thus, the card noted by the spectator will be the lowest value spade in the packet.

Point to Packet A, reminding the spectator that this was the original top third of the deck, and that you might know the identity of the top card. To circumvent this possibility, the spectator is asked to pick up the packet and shuffle it thoroughly. *"Now please look at and remember the new top card, which your shuffle has randomly brought to that location."* After noting the card, the spectator replaces it on top of the packet and returns these cards to their original location on the table. Proceed by giving the spectator the following instructions:



"Please pick up the packet in the middle [Packet C], *originally the bottom third of the deck. Since I might know some of those cards, please shuffle the packet thoroughly. Now I can't know how many cards are in this packet, since you cut it yourself; nor can I know the positions of any cards in it, since you shuffled it yourself. Please place this packet on top of the packet on your right* [Packet A], *hopelessly burying the second card you looked at in the deck."* Finally, have Packet B placed on top of the other two packets, reassembling the deck.

If it seems desirable—and appropriate—you can quickly review the fair manner in which both cards were chosen and lost in the deck. In any case, emphasize that the spectator shuffled each packet. Then pick up the deck and fan it with the faces of the cards toward you. You are looking first for the lowest value spade in the top third of the deck. This is the first card the spectator noted. Let's assume it is the Six of Spades. Place it face down on the table in front of the spectator.

To find the second card, you must add ten to the value of the tabled spade. In our example, this would yield sixteen. The sixteenth card from the face of the deck is the second card the spectator noted. Take it out of the deck and table it face down next to the first card. Ask the spectator to name both selections. After a brief pause, turn the two cards face up—they are the two cards just named!

Final Notes

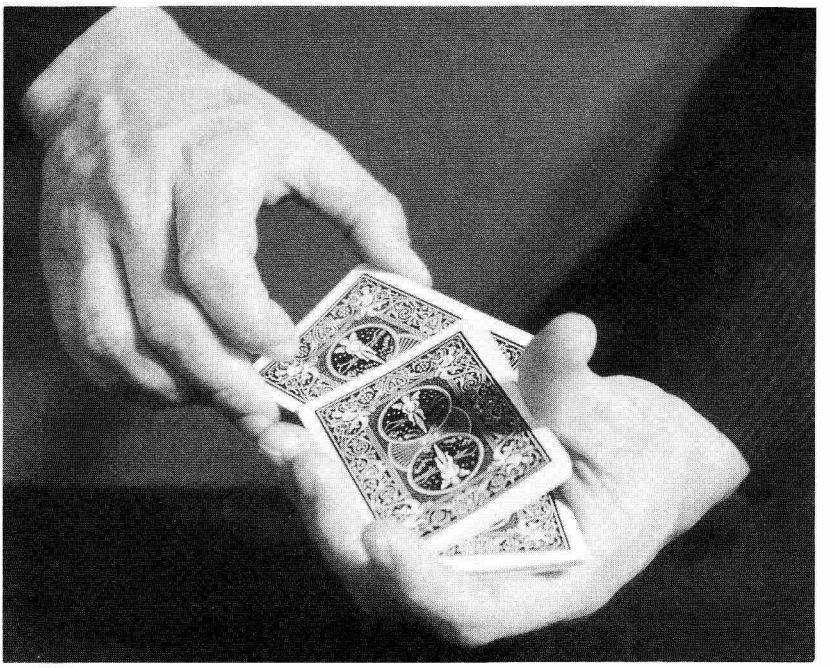
1. Of course, you can use two spectators, having each think of a card, rather than putting the entire burden on one person. With a large audience, this is preferable.
2. You can use the script just as it is given here. This is how I always present this trick. You may think the script is too confusing and that you could present it with fewer words. But the words I use serve to divert the spectators' thoughts along specific paths, eliminating from the outset possible solutions and forcing the spectators to conclude that what they have just experienced is absolutely impossible. And isn't that the goal of magic, to evoke in the minds of your spectators a sense of the impossible, perhaps even, of the miraculous?

CHAPTER 11

HINDU SHUFFLE TECHNIQUE

"The great art includes much that the small art excludes..."

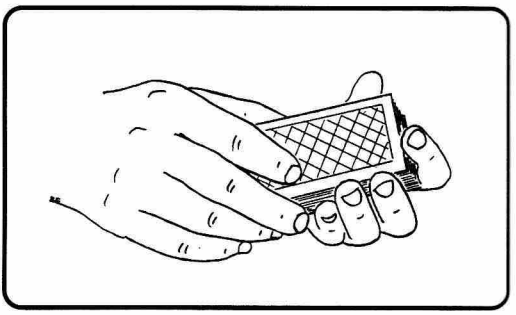
Oscar W. Firkins



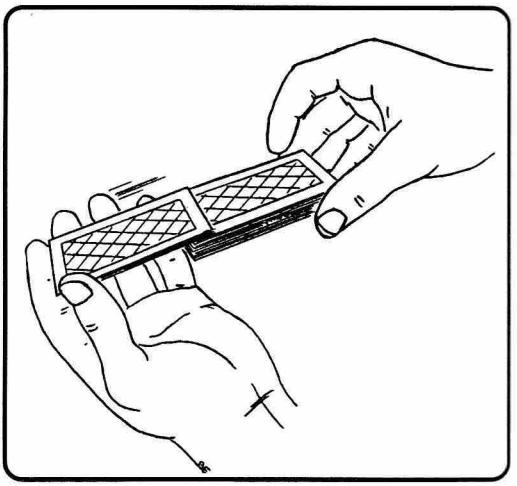
The Hindu shuffle is basically a technical variation of the overhand shuffle. It may look slightly unnatural to spectators when they first see it, although in some countries it is considered a normal and legitimate method of shuffling. But it will sometimes be advisable to justify the shuffle in the context of a routine with a witticism or gag. We'll discuss this further in the trick descriptions; but first, I will describe the basic technique and several interesting technical applications.

The Hindu Shuffle

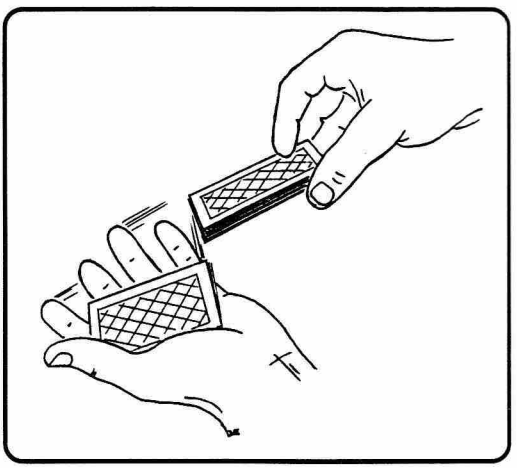
Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position; then, with the right hand, grasp it from above, thumb on the left side near the inner end, middle and ring fingers on the right side. Place the right little finger on the inner end of the deck near the inner right corner to keep the cards under control there. Simultaneously lift the deck to the left fingertips, as shown in the illustration (a view from the front).

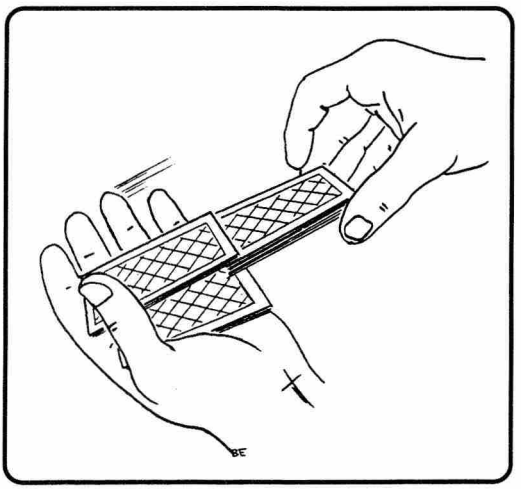


Begin the shuffle by pulling a block of cards from the top with the left thumb and middle finger. The left ring finger can assist in this, but the left little finger plays no part in pulling off cards. Move only the left hand, keeping the right hand stationary throughout the shuffle.



Continue to pull the cards forward with the left hand until the inner end of the upper packet passes the outer end of the lower packet. Release the left fingers' grip, allowing the removed packet to land on the left palm while the fingers remain raised high around it. The left index finger keeps the cards from sliding forward and out of the hand.



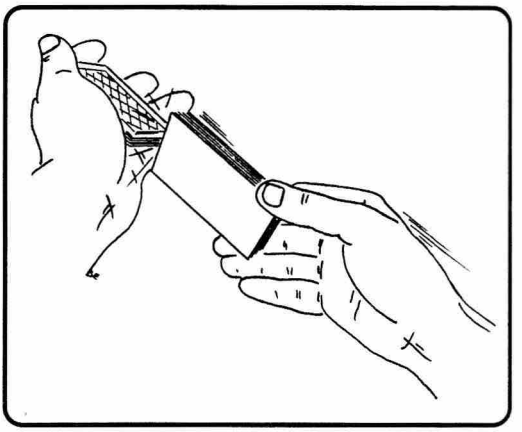


Now the left outer phalanges are free to pull another block of cards from the top of the deck onto the cards in the left hand, which they do. Continue this until all the right hand's cards are gone. Generally, this is accomplished in eight to ten shuffle actions, but the shuffle can be shortened by pulling off larger blocks.

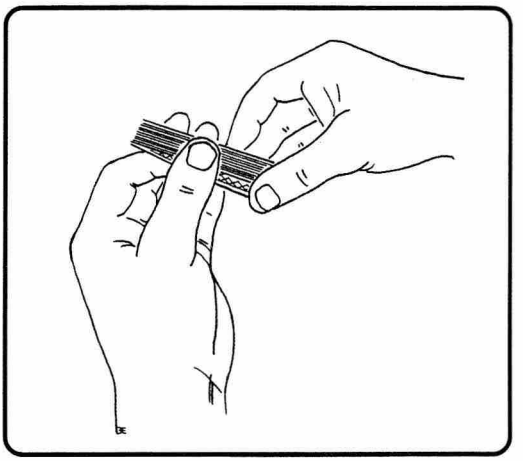
Check Points

1. For the initial shuffle action, the block of cards being pulled off the deck is held by the left middle and ring fingers just below the finger pads, and by the outer phalanx of the thumb on the opposite side. For the subsequent shuffle actions, however, the blocks contact the outer joint of the thumb instead of the outer phalanx.
2. I want to emphasize once more, that you move only the left hand, keeping the right hand still. First, because it is more elegant to have the left hand move away from the body than to have the right hand move toward it. Second, because this handling of the shuffle is clearer for the spectators, who can see which packets go where. This is true of practically all Hindu shuffle techniques.
3. Don't forget the position of the right little finger. It acts as a stop in picking up the deck with the right hand. This ensures that the other fingers immediately and automatically find their proper positions.

Glimpsing the Bottom Card with a Hindu Shuffle



Begin a Hindu shuffle. After a few shuffle actions, use the right hand's packet to tap the left hand's cards square. Do this by first turning the right hand so its palm faces you. The deck will form an angle of seventy to eighty degrees with respect to the horizon. Tap the inner end of the left hand's cards against the outer end of the right hand's packet, obviously squaring them. As this is being done, you can glimpse the outer right index of the bottom card of the right hand's packet.



To bring the glimpsed card to the top, take a right thumb break above the bottom card before beginning the shuffle. This is done as follows: Bring the cards to the left fingertips as is usual at the start of the shuffle. The right hand at this point controls the deck, allowing the left thumb to separate the bottom card from the deck, using a light touch, along the lower left edge. This break is immediately transferred to the right thumb and the shuffle is begun. It is now a simple matter to glimpse the bottom card during the shuffle, then shuffle off to it, letting it fall last on top of the left hand's cards.

Placing a Key Card with a Hindu Shuffle

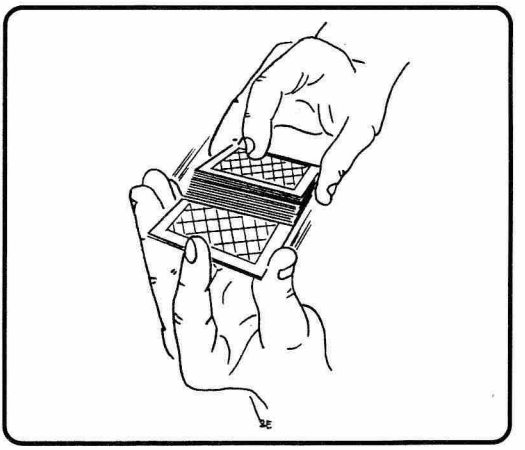
The spectator has chosen a card and is ready to return it to the deck. Begin a Hindu shuffle, glimpsing the bottom card after a few shuffle actions. Continue the shuffle, then extend the left hand's packet for the return of the chosen card. Once the spectator has placed the card on top of the packet, toss the right hand's cards on top of it. This places the key card directly over the spectator's.

The above handling is very easy and you will be able to perform it immediately, provided you have mastered the basic technique of a Hindu shuffle. I will, therefore, now describe an extension and refinement of this technique.

Begin the Hindu shuffle as before, glimpse the bottom card, continue shuffling a bit more and have the spectator replace the chosen card on the left hand's packet. Now, instead of simply tossing the right hand's packet onto the left hand's cards, continue shuffling by first pulling off the lowermost cards of the right hand's packet with the left thumb and middle finger; then shuffle off the rest of the right hand's stock normally. Further details and the illustrations of this sequence will be found in the following Hindu shuffle technique.

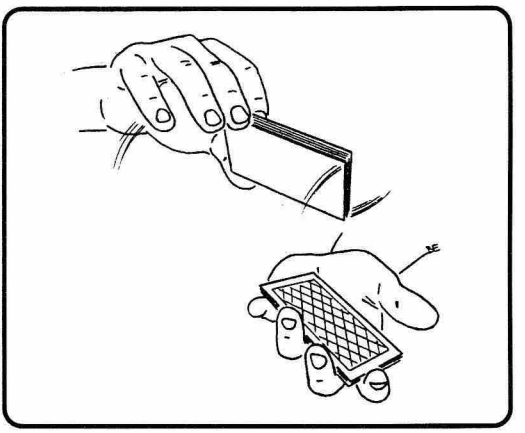
The Hindu Shuffle Force

The Hindu shuffle provides you with a simple and practical card force. One advantage of this method is that it does not require the spectators to remove cards from the deck. This allows those seated farther away to participate, which is particularly advantageous in a parlor-style performance, and is one of the reasons this technique is so often used.



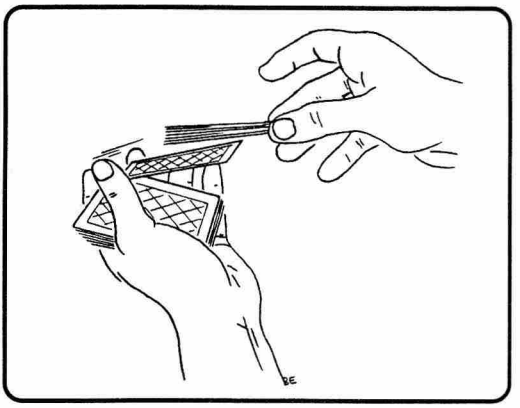
The force card is on the bottom of the deck. Begin a Hindu shuffle, but pull off a block of cards from the bottom of the deck rather than the top on the first shuffle action.

This is accomplished by forming a "funnel" with the left thumb and middle finger and squeezing the right and left edges of the bottom cards into it. (This illustration and the next show views from the front.) For misdirection, look directly at a spectator and ask this person to call *stop* anytime as you shuffle through the cards.



Continue with a few regular Hindu shuffle actions, but stop before the spectator says anything and display the face of the bottom card as you explain, *"I'll ask you to remember the bottom card wherever you stop me."*

Return the right hand's cards to the horizontal plane and continue the shuffle and explanation by again pulling a few cards from the bottom, followed by a few regular shuffle actions, then a second display that shows the new bottom card. This may be repeated several times. Each time cards are pulled from the bottom, look at the spectator and say something like *"Wherever you call stop will yield a different card."*



Go through the entire deck once in this explanatory phase. Should the spectator call *stop* during the explanation, point out that you are only explaining the procedure that will be used in a moment to choose one card from the entire deck.

Begin a second Hindu shuffle and stop where the spectator commands. Display the bottom card of the right hand's packet to the audience: your force card. You can now place all the cards remaining in the right hand onto the left hand's packet, completing the sequence. Or, if you wish, you can introduce an additional subtlety as follows: After displaying the force card, continue the Hindu shuffle, but begin it by pulling a small block of cards from the bottom of the right hand's stock. After a few regular shuffle actions, display the new bottom card. This may be repeated several times until the right hand's packet is exhausted. As you do this, you point out, *"Had you stopped me here or here, the card would have been quite different."*

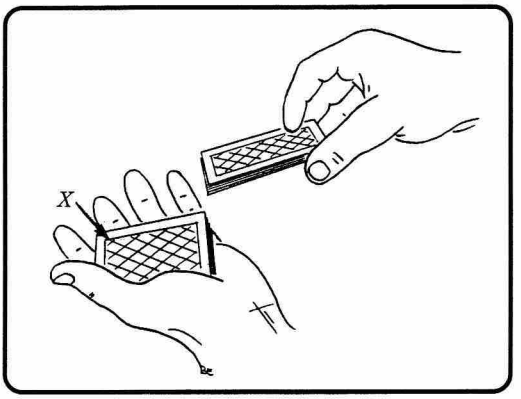
Check Points

1. Pulling the cards from the bottom is no more difficult than pulling them from the top. It is important, however, that as you do so you look at the spectators and make a pertinent remark to misdirect their attention.
2. The cards must be pulled from the bottom with no break in the rhythm from a normal shuffle. This will render the maneuver deceptive even for those who are not misdirected and look unswervingly at the deck.
3. The initial, explanatory shuffle should be performed somewhat more slowly and clearly than the subsequent one, in which the card is forced. This compels the spectator to concentrate on calling out *stop* rather than noting that the bottom card has been there from the outset.

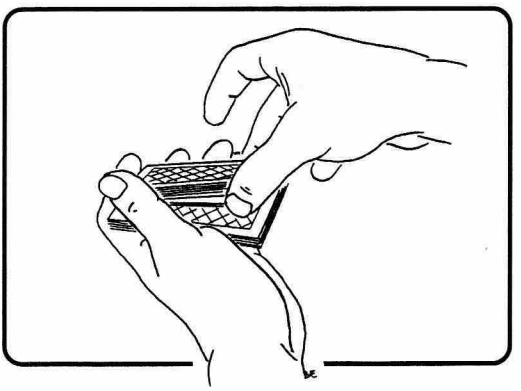
Hindu Shuffle Card Controls

The Hindu shuffle technique allows you to control one or more cards, bringing them to the top. It will seem more natural if the cards that are to be controlled with the Hindu shuffle have also been chosen in the course of such a shuffle: Have the spectator call *stop* as you perform the shuffle. The spectator then takes the top card of the shuffled-off packet and you proceed directly to one of the control techniques.

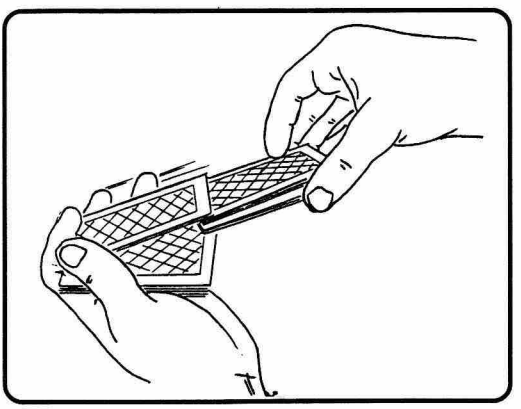
Controlling a Single Card



Have a spectator choose a card. Begin a fresh Hindu shuffle, shuffling off about half the deck. Have the spectator place the selection on top of the shuffled-off packet. In the illustration, X indicates the chosen card. If desired, the spectator can determine this location by calling *stop* in the course of the shuffle.



Proceed with the next shuffle action, which brings the right hand's packet over the left's. With the right thumb and ring finger, contact the sides of the topmost cards of the left hand's packet near the inner corners and lift them slightly.



Proceed with the shuffle, taking the cards separated from the top of the left hand's packet under the right hand's packet, but maintaining a break with the right thumb above the stolen cards. Shuffle off to the break and, as your last shuffle action, drop the stolen packet on top. You have just controlled the spectator's card to the top.

Check Points

1. Before the spectator replaces the selection, square the left hand's packet by tapping the outer end of the right hand's cards against the inner end of the left's packet.
2. As you steal the small packet, look at the spectators and say something like *"Please don't forget your card."* This momentary distraction helps to hide the technique.

Controlling Multiple Cards

There are many good tricks in which several cards are chosen and must then be controlled to specific locations in the deck. Most multiple-card controls, often referred to simply as *multiple controls* or more specifically *multiple shifts*, are technically demanding and require years of experience with a deck of cards.

The Hindu-shuffle-based technique described below is distinguished by its remarkable simplicity. If you have mastered the Hindu shuffle and the single-card control, the following technique will present no difficulties.

Let's say that three cards have been chosen. Start a Hindu shuffle, shuffling off about one third of the deck, and have the first spectator replace the chosen card onto the shuffled-off packet.

Proceed with the shuffle, stealing off the top few cards of the left hand's packet as described in the control for a single card.

Shuffle off until about half the deck is in your left hand, then pause again for the return of the second selection, but let the stolen packet in the right hand fall onto the left hand's packet after the last shuffle action. Have the second spectator's card replaced on the left hand's packet. It is now directly above the first chosen card.

Proceed with the shuffle again, stealing off the top few cards from the left hand's packet as before. Repeat the above sequence for the return of the third selection, having it replaced onto the other two. Steal the top cards from the left hand's packet a final time and shuffle off, letting the stolen cards drop onto the deck as the final shuffle action. This brings the three chosen cards to the top in reverse order, all with a single shuffle. If you require the cards to be on top in the order they were chosen, simply have the third card replaced first, followed by the second, then the first.

TRICKS WITH THE HINDU SHUFFLE TECHNIQUE

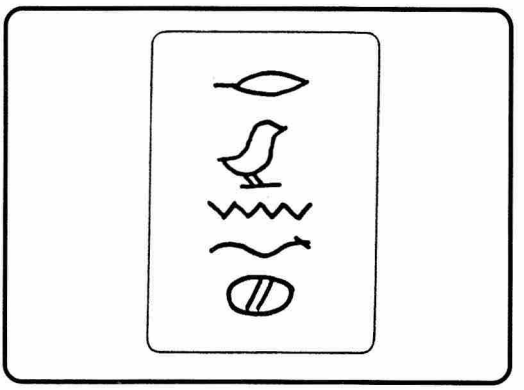
The Magus Card

Effect

The performer displays a mysterious card bearing arcane symbols. This is the Magus Card. The hieroglyphs on the card instruct a spectator to cut the deck in a particular fashion; and, on the spectator making the final cut instructed, a previously chosen card is revealed. Slowly the performer turns over the Magus card—and its face is that of a normal card—one that matches the spectator's selection!

Preparation

In addition to a deck of cards, you will need a card from a deck with a contrasting back design. Using a fine-tipped permanent-ink marker, draw several hieroglyphs on the back of this card. You can use the symbols shown in the illustration or find others, but take care to use genuine hieroglyphs and not just some imaginary images.



Once prepared, this card can be carried in your wallet and you will always be ready to perform the effect, provided a corresponding deck of cards is available. Let's assume that the Magus Card is the Ace of Clubs. If you follow the whims of a perfectionist, you will want to contact a magic dealer and obtain an Ace of Clubs with a blank back from which to make your Magus Card.

Construction, Management and Script

During the course of the previous effect, or at its conclusion, bring the Ace of Clubs to the top of the deck, then set the deck on the table.

Remove the Magus Card from your wallet and display its back while letting no one see its face. *"This is an exact reproduction of a playing card found in an ancient Egyptian tomb. The original was drawn on a stiff piece of papyrus shaped like a playing card. The symbols have been passed from magician to magician for generations and each generation places the symbols on a card from its own time. In this effect, I shall demonstrate the power of the Magus Card. Why it is called that I am not at liberty to reveal."*

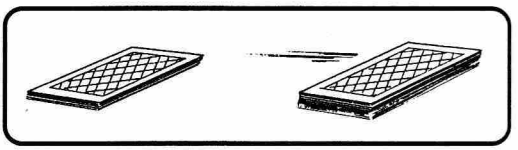
Pick up the deck and hold it face down in left-hand dealing position. Catch a left little-finger break under the top card, then place the Magus Card on the deck and execute a triple cut

to bring the top two cards to the bottom. To all appearances you have lost the Magus Card in the deck.

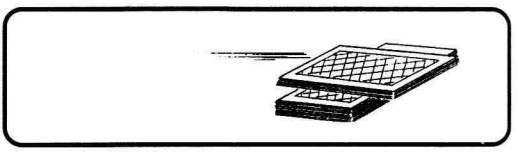
Using the Hindu shuffle, force the bottom card of the deck on a spectator, employing all the subtleties described earlier. The Hindu shuffle is particularly well suited for this effect, as it allows a card to be forced without exposing its relationship to the Magus card. After showing the card on the face of the right hand's packet to the audience, place the these cards onto those in the left hand. If you wish, give the deck a face-up overhand shuffle, but take care not to separate the Magus Card from the forced selection.

"The Magus Card has always had the power to solve mysteries. Right now, the name of your card and its position in the deck are mysteries to me." Spread the deck face down between your hands until you reach the Magus Card. Split the deck at this spot and deposit the Magus Card face down on the table. Place the left hand's cards onto the right's to bring the Ace of Clubs to the top of the deck. The Magus Card has served as an "open" key card to locate the selection.

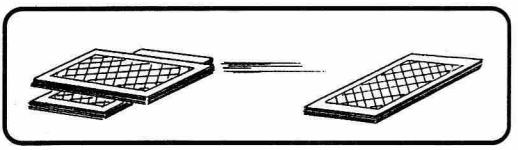
"The Magus Card will tell us how to find your card." Appear to read the "instructions" on the back of the Magus Card. From these the spectator is told to cut off two-thirds of the deck and place it to your right...



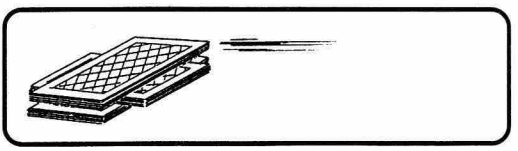
...then to complete the cut, turning the bottom third ninety degrees when placing it onto the other two-thirds.



Next the spectator is told to cut off two-thirds of the deck again, this time to your left...



...and to complete the cut by placing the bottom third onto the other packets.



Now, through your interpretation of the Magus Card, instruct the spectator to cut off the top two packets and set them to the right while turning them ninety degrees.

Finally, you command your apprentice mage to place the remaining packet onto the other two and square the deck.

"According to the Magus Card, the series of cuts that you yourself have carried out has brought your card to the top of the deck. If so, then great happiness will be yours for the rest of your life." Ask the spectator to name the card, then to turn over the top card of the deck—it is the chosen card!

After a brief pause, ask, *"Do you know how the Magus Card knew that?"* Look portentously at each of the spectators, then slowly and silently turn the Magus Card face up.

Final Notes

1. The face of the Magus Card should be instantly recognizable. I have suggested the Ace of Clubs because—unlike court cards—it is nearly identical in every deck. Naturally, under certain circumstances, and if you are performing with your own deck, a card with obvious symbolic meaning, such as the Ace of Hearts, may be used.
2. If you carry several Magus Cards in your wallet, you can perform the effect for spectators who have seen it before and may still remember the name of the previously chosen card.
3. The script can be delivered with total seriousness. Few will believe it, but no one will be completely certain. If you don't favor this mystical approach, use Chinese or Arabic symbols instead of hieroglyphs and accompany the effect with an amusing story.

The Lucky Card

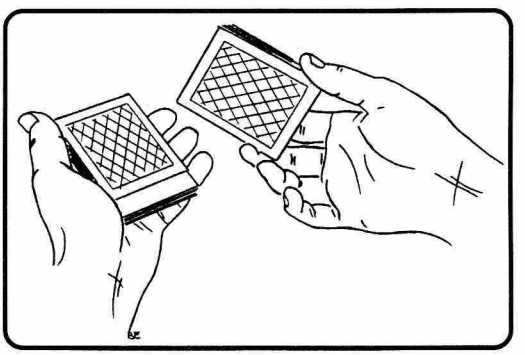
Effect

The spectator finds a previously selected card with the help of a lucky card, but has no idea how. Both the spectator's card and the subsequently chosen lucky card are genuinely free selections.

Construction, Management and Script

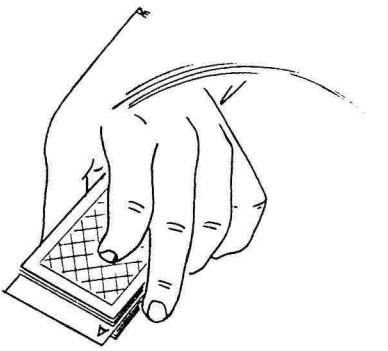
A card is freely selected by having the spectator call *stop* in the course of a Hindu shuffle. After the card is shown, you control it to the top with another Hindu shuffle as previously described.

"Everyone has a lucky card, even if he doesn't know it." Turn the deck face up and begin a Hindu shuffle, instructing the spectator to call *stop*. Indicating the top card of the face-up packet in your left hand, say, *"That, then, is your lucky card. Did you know that?"*



With the help of the right hand's packet, flip the lucky card over sidewise, so that it lands face down on the left hand's packet and projects forward about an inch. Drop the right hand's cards on top of the left's.

Turn the left hand palm down and again draw attention to the spectator's lucky card. Then ribbon spread the deck face down from left to right on the table, saying, *"You* apparently *chose any card, which we have turned face up* apparently *anywhere in the deck. I say* apparently *because in fact we are dealing with your lucky card. And I think you have been very lucky."* Push the lucky card and the card to its immediate left out of the spread. Then turn the face-down card face up. It is the chosen card. What a coincidence!



Final Notes

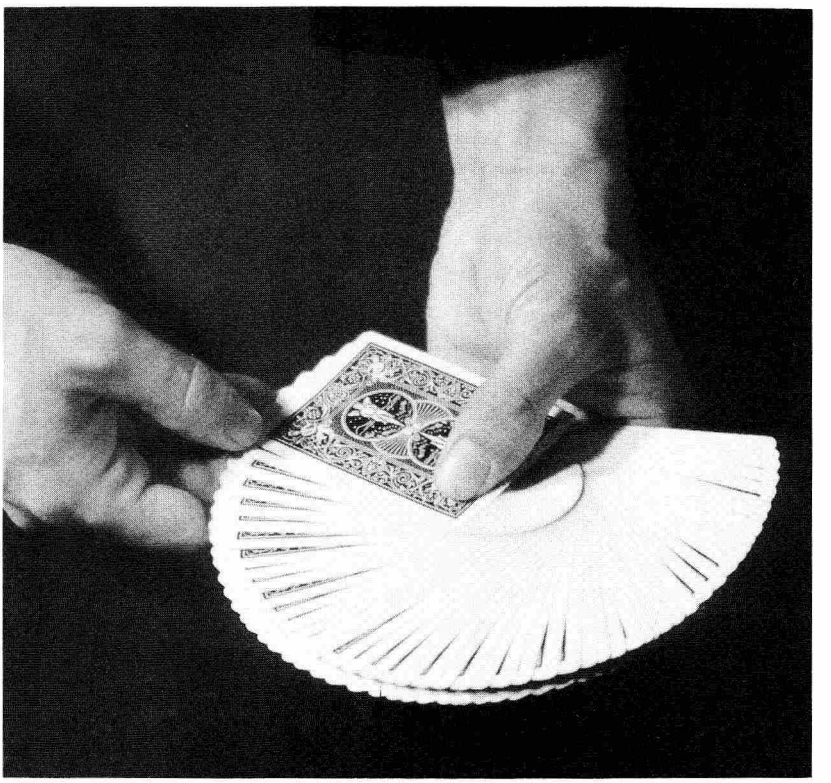
1. This trick lasts only about a minute and is ideal as an ice breaker, leading into a longer routine.
2. Note how the Hindu shuffle is used consistently throughout: selecting, controlling and placing the relevant cards. This consistency gives a coherence to the procedure that causes the somewhat unusual handling of the deck to become accepted as natural.

CHAPTER 12

FLOURISHES, PART 1

"He who does not try, knows not what he can do."

Publilius Syrus



Flourishes are essentially overt techniques in the service of showmanship. The "card tricks" of stage manipulators often consist largely of flourishes, such as one- and two-handed fans, springing and cascading the cards, tossing a ribbon of cards into the air and catching it again, throwing and catching individual cards like boomerangs. There are also flourish effects, such as the bare-handed production of single cards or even fans of cards, the diminishing and expanding of cards, etc.

The distinction between flourishes and flourish effects is critical for the close-up card worker. Flourish effects will not be taught in this book. By "flourish effects" I mean those manipulations producing a magical result and having choreographic or æsthetic pretensions, but insufficient theatrical substance. They generally have almost no dramatic plot, although they provoke astonishment in a magical sense. Their effectiveness is based primarily and often exclusively on their visual attributes, in contrast to the more usual card effects, which—no matter how short—are built around a more complex plot with dramatically structured interactions.

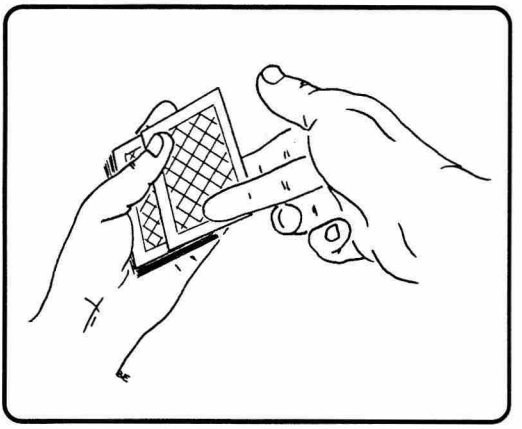
Flourishes proper, on the other hand, showcase the performer's skill, whether at the table or on the stage. The goal is not to mystify by performing something inexplicable, but to handle the cards in an unusual, yet æsthetically pleasing manner. Flourishes serve not only to underscore the performer's skill, but also to create psychological and dramatic accents in the course of the routine.

Many competent performers have expressed their opinions on the use of flourishes, resulting in three basic schools of thought on the subject. At one extreme are those who maintain that the performer should handle the cards clumsily, so that the subsequent trick appears as miraculous as possible. With no apparent skill involved, it can only have been accomplished by magic. At the other extreme are those who believe this is nonsense and that the performer should appear as skillful as possible, dazzling the spectators with displays of manipulative bravura. Between these two extremes lies a third school, which follows the philosophy of naturalness championed by Dai Vernon, universally and respectfully known as the "Professor". This school teaches that the cards should be handled so as not to arouse suspicion. Above all, they should be handled neatly and nonchalantly, with the ease and casualness that defines the true master. Doesn't one expect a violin virtuoso to hold the violin securely and guide the bow precisely, with complete ease and confidence?

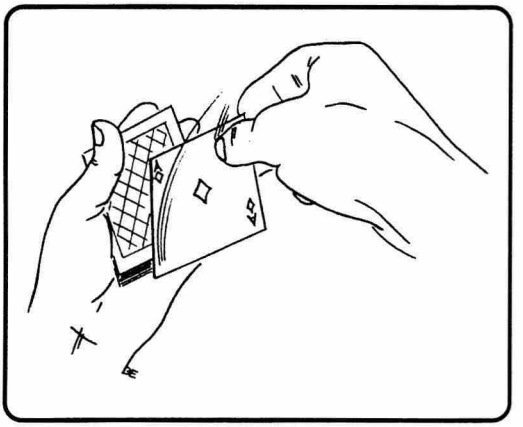
A discretely introduced flourish, such as the dribbling of the cards after the return of a selection to the deck, helps to underscore the fairness of the procedure. Using Charlier's one-handed cut (which I'll teach shortly) in a humorous fashion—performing it just as you ask the spectator to cut the cards, then saying, *"Thank you, that's enough,"*—adds situation comedy to the performance. An unusual way of turning a face-down card face up to reveal the chosen card can strengthen the effect. Using an elegantly made fan to display the cards as all different imbues the handling with an æsthetic quality.

This chapter gathers together a number of relatively easy flourishes. They give the impression of above-average dexterity and—properly applied—can make an effect considerably more memorable and impressive for an audience. Introduce them into your performances with care and intelligence, and they will contribute disproportionately to your success.

Turning Over the Top Card I



Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position and, with your left thumb, push the top card to the right. Place your right index finger on the face of the card and the right middle finger on its back, near the inner right corner.

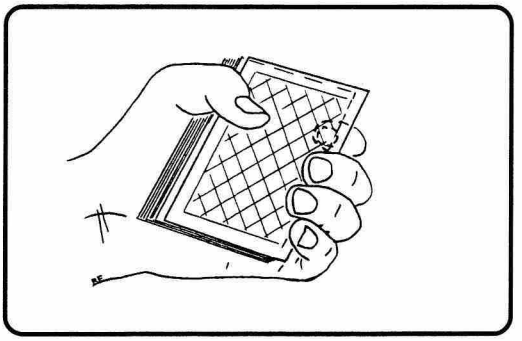


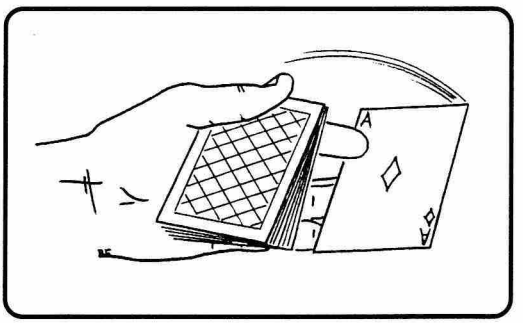
Push down with the middle finger and up with the index finger, while releasing the left thumb's pressure. Doing this turns the card face up almost automatically, and it can then be gripped for display between the right thumb and middle finger.

Should you wish to return the card face down onto the deck, simply continue the rotation of the card by turning the right hand palm down and softly depositing the card face down onto the deck.

Turning Over the Top Card II

This one-handed technique for turning over the top card is a flourish devised by Dai Vernon. It is useful when, for example, you are already holding a card in the right hand and you want to turn both cards over simultaneously.





Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position and press with the left index finger against its right side. At the same time, use the left thumb to push the top card to the right, so that it slides over the nail of the index finger. Immediately curl the outer phalanges of the middle, ring and little fingers onto the right edge of the extended card.

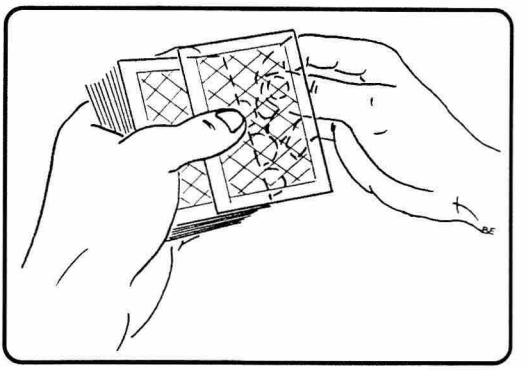
Release the thumb's grip and press down with the middle, ring and little fingers as you extend the index finger. This flips the card face up and it ends up gripped between the outer phalanges of the index and middle fingers. By adjusting the positions of these fingers, you can bring the card to a vertical position, so that it can be seen by spectators seated at a distance. If you are also holding a card in the right hand, you can turn it over simultaneously using the same technique.

By repeating this procedure several times, you can count cards from the left hand into the right in a rather eccentric, but effective manner.

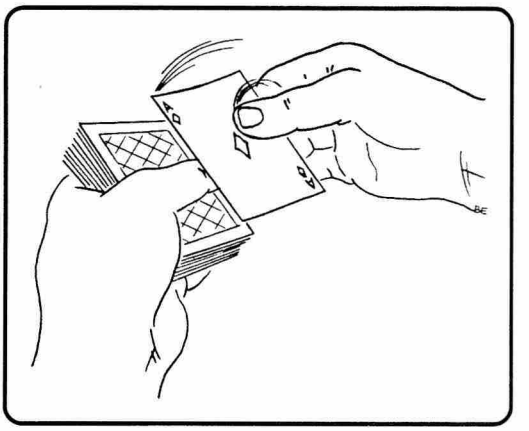
Turning Over the Top Card III

This flourish is of unknown origin and was shown to the famous American "cardician" Edward Marlo by a ship's cook.[38]

Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position and use the left thumb to push the top card to the right for about half its width. Bring the right hand under the card and place the back of the right thumb against the face of the card, as shown in this transparent view.

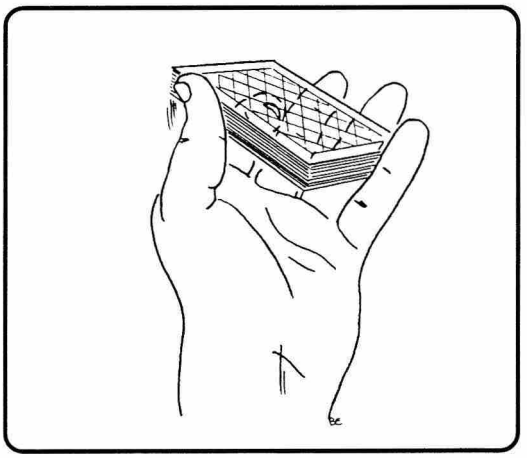


Thrust the right thumb upward and to the left. The card will pivot swiftly face up between the thumbs. As soon as this happens, place your right index finger on its back and grip it between the right thumb and index finger. Then place the card on the table. This method can also be used to count cards.

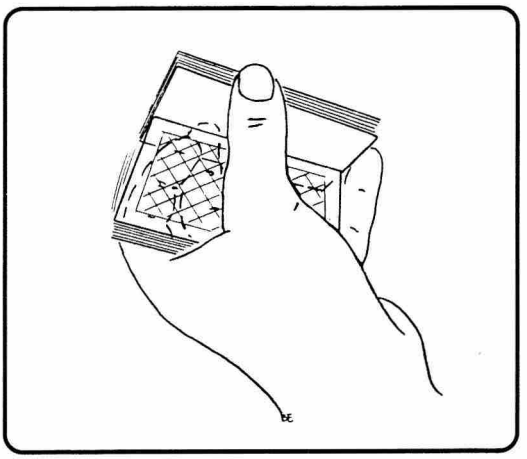


The Charlier Cut

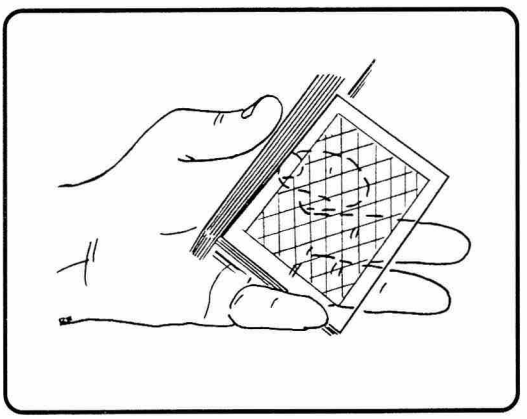
Although this cut can be used as a one-handed pass—that is, a secret cut not intended to be seen by the spectators—it is described here as a visible flourish. It is the invention of the nineteenth century enigma, Charlier.[39]



Begin with the deck in left-hand dealing position, then adjust the fingers to straddle dealing position. Next curl the index finger underneath and press upward, bringing the deck into the position shown.

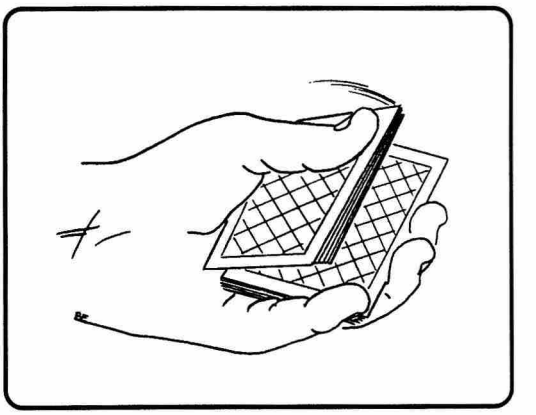


Release the lower half of the deck from the thumb. Guided by the index finger, this packet falls onto the palm. Now move the pad of the index finger onto the face of the bottom card, near the outer right index corner. Also note the position of the little finger at the inner end.



With the index finger, press the lower packet up against the thumb. This causes the right side of this packet to slide along the face of the upper half until the packets separate. At that moment the unsupported upper half falls onto the curled outer phalanx of the left index finger.

With your thumb, push the former bottom half over to the right and down as you move the index finger to the outer end and the little finger to the right side. You should now be holding a squared deck in normal left-hand dealing position.



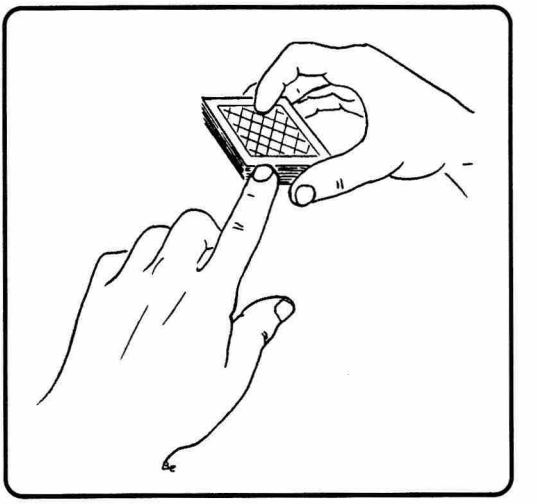
Check Points

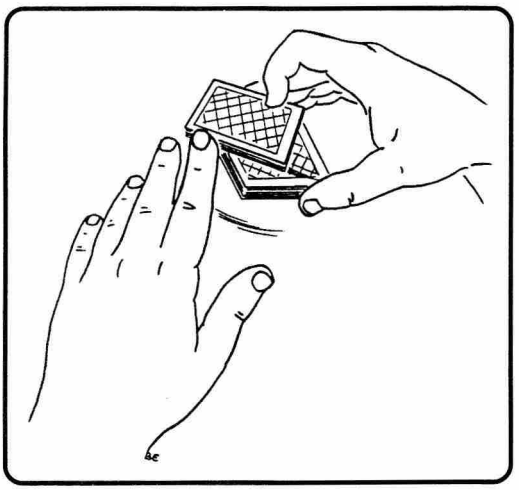
1. Note the exact position of each finger. The little finger in particular serves to keep the cards from sliding out of the hand during the flourish.
2. By beginning and ending the sequence with the deck in normal dealing position, the cut will not only be efficient, but also pleasing to watch.

The Swivel Cut

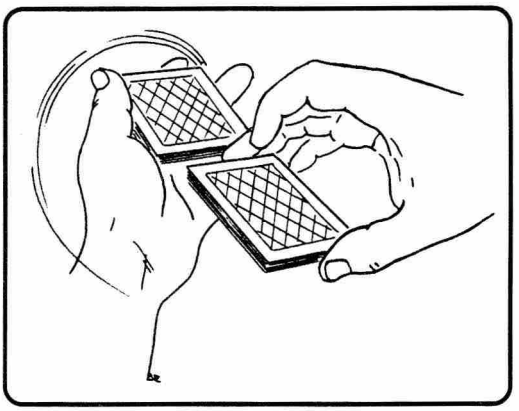
The swivel cut is the creation of the American vaudeville legend, Nate Leipzig.[40] It is a two-handed flourish that, as you will see in subsequent chapters, has many possible applications to trick techniques.

Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position. Then take the deck into right-hand end grip. Immediately place the tip of the left index finger against the inner end of the deck.





Lift the upper half of the deck slightly with the left index finger and begin to pivot this packet to the left and forward in a clockwise arc. If the right thumb had been holding a break, the cards above the break could be pivoted by the index finger.

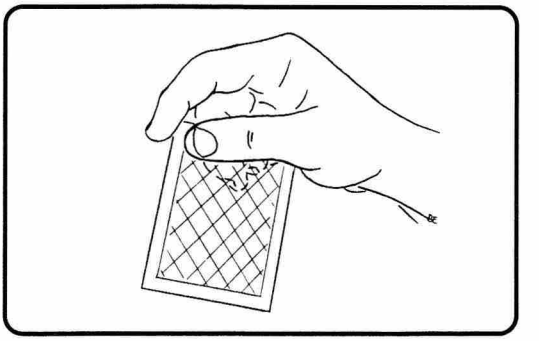


Continue the clockwise pivoting of the upper half, using the right middle finger as an axis, until the cards have swiveled a hundred and eighty degrees; that is, end for end. As a consequence of this action, the left hand naturally turns palm up as it carries the packet outward. Once the hands and cards have reached the position shown in the illustration, let the rotated packet fall into left-hand dealing position. Toss the right hand's cards onto the left hand's packet and square the deck.

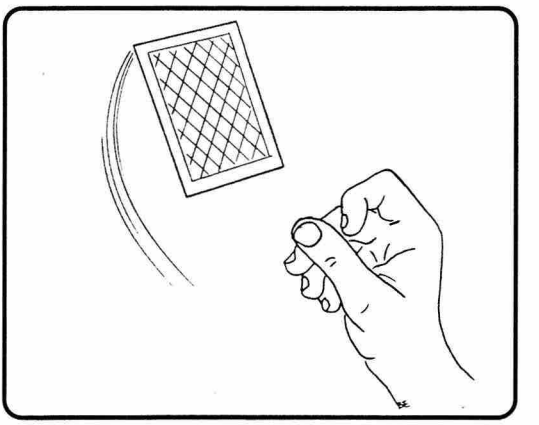
The Boomerang Card

In this flourish, a card is spun into the air and returns like a boomerang to the hand that threw it. The flourish is especially well suited for a card transformation or when one card is magically split into two (see Check Point 2).

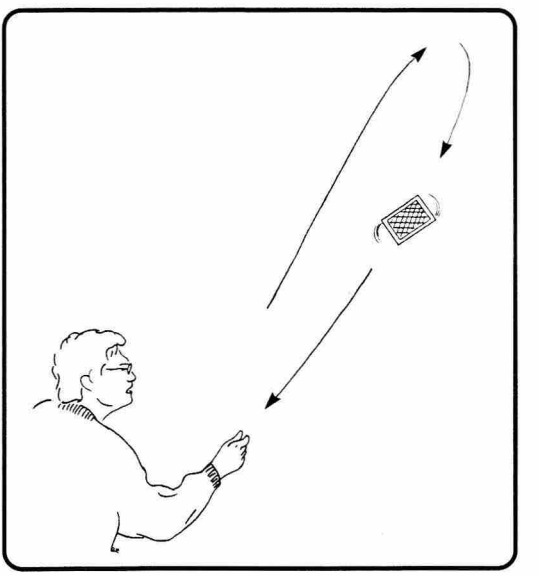
Begin with the deck in left-hand dealing position. Take the top card by its outer end into the right hand as shown in this transparent view. (The illustrations will only show the right hand's action.) Especially note the position of the index finger's pad on the outer left corner of the card.



Move the right hand sharply outward at a forty-five degree angle relative to the horizon. Then pull the hand back with a slight but well-defined snap as you release the card. At the very instant you let go of it, curl the right index finger inward to set it spinning.



Depending on the strength of the toss, the card will sail one yard or farther outward before returning to your hand on a slightly lower trajectory.

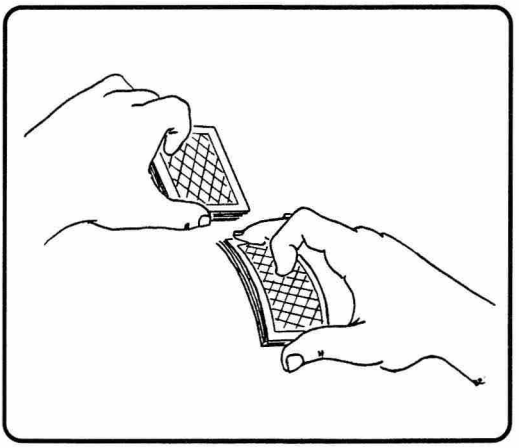


Check Points

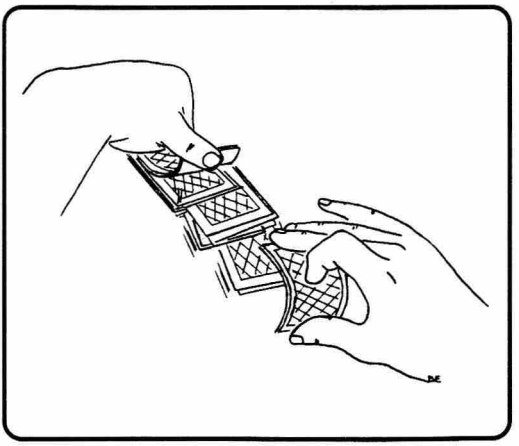
1. Both the angle of the toss (approximately forty-five degrees) and the curling in of the right index finger are critical to the success of this flourish.
2. If the flourish is executed with two squared cards, they will separate in the air and can, with practice, be caught one in each hand on their return.
3. This technique provides wonderful physical misdirection for the left hand. You can use this hand to reverse the top card (see Chapter 24, *Volume 2*, on "Reverses") or you can ditch cards—even the entire deck—in the outer left jacket-pocket.

The Spring Riffle Shuffle

The spring riffle shuffle is a spectacular and little-known method for shuffling the deck. I first encountered this technique in an English pub and have never seen it anywhere since. To the best of my knowledge, it is documented here for the first time.

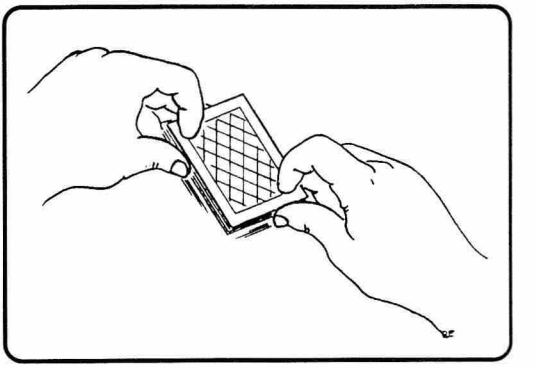


Set the deck on the table with one end facing you. Lift off the top half in right-hand end grip and buckle the cards convexly in preparation for springing them. If necessary, the left hand can aid the buckling by pressing lightly upward on the underside of the packet. Next grip the tabled packet in left-hand end grip as shown in the illustration.



With your left thumb, lift the inner end of the tabled packet about an inch off the table and riffle the cards evenly back onto the table. Simultaneously, spring the right hand's cards forward off the fingertips and into the inner end of the tabled packet.

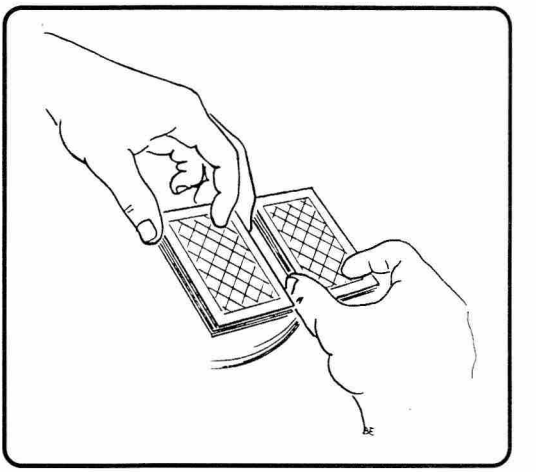
Finish by squaring the deck, using the usual post-riffle shuffle technique (page 107).



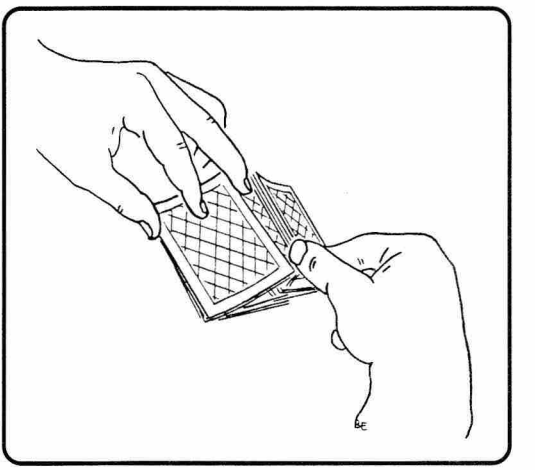
Jack Merlin's Riffle Shuffle

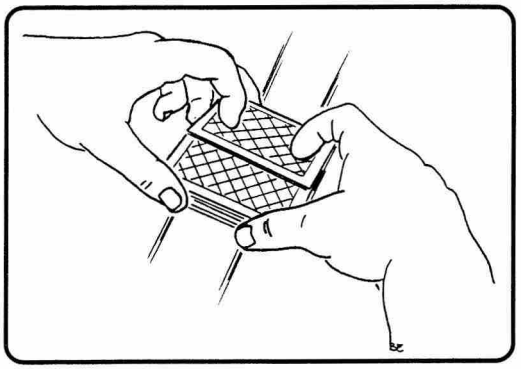
This admittedly somewhat exotic riffle shuffle comes from the American card and cheating expert, Jack Merlin.[41] It is particularly well-suited for gambling routines where you want to demonstrate how the cheat shuffled.

Hold the deck in riffle shuffle starting position (see page 105). With your right hand, cut about half the cards to the right. If necessary, you can square the halves by tapping their ends together. Then move the right-hand half in front of the other packet.



Begin this unorthodox shuffle by riffling the outer half with the right thumb and the inner half with the left middle finger. The right thumb riffles as usual at the inner right corner of its half, but the action of the left middle finger is more unusual. It riffles the cards along the outer side, near the outer left corner.

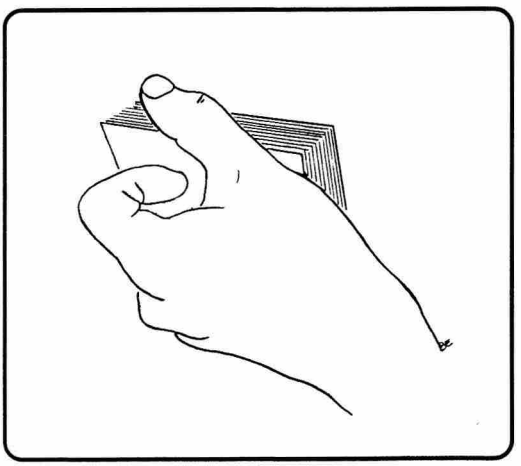




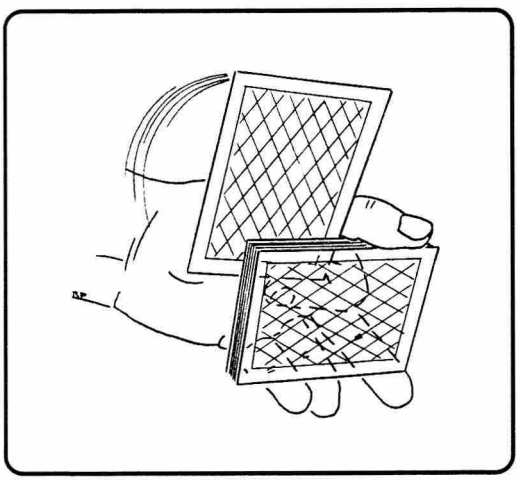
Push the cards together and square the deck. In principle you use the same fingering for this as in the normal riffle shuffle, except that the fingers must be extended more at the beginning of the squaring.

The Pop-up Card

This flourish is actually a light-hearted handling of the rising card plot, as a card actually rises in an unusual fashion at a right angle to the deck. It is the invention of the respected French amateur magician, Dr. Jules Dhotel.[42]



Hold the slightly unsquared deck in left-hand dealing position. Bring the right hand over the deck to take it into end grip and square the cards. In doing so, bevel them inward at the upper edge. With your right hand, pretend to pull a hair from your head. Fasten this imaginary hair to the lower left corner of the deck, which you now hold vertically, thumb's side uppermost, with the back of the deck broadside to the audience. The base of the left thumb contacts the bottom of the deck near the raised inner left corner, and the left index finger curls onto the face of the deck.

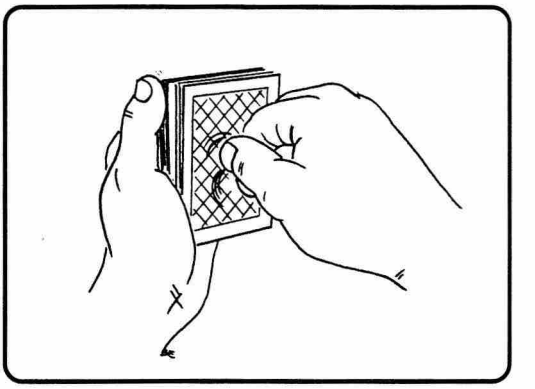


Grasp the free end of the invisible hair in your right hand and, taking advantage of the misdirection afforded by this action, use the pad of the left index finger to separate the bottom card approximately an eighth of an inch from the deck. The beveled end of the deck facilitates this. Now pull up on the imaginary hair with the right hand. Simultaneously, push the bottom card inward and upward with the left index finger. The pressure of the base of the left thumb against the bottom of the deck acts as a pivot point around which the card rotates until it comes to rest at right angles to the deck (see the transparent view in the illustration).

The Wind-up Gag

After performing an effective trick, confess to your astonished audience that such things are only made possible through the use of a mechanical deck. Unfortunately, it must be wound up every now and then. You are, however, in the process of developing one with a quartz mechanism. As you deliver this nonsense with a straight face, you wind up the deck with an invisible key, producing loud clockwork winding sounds in the process. You might even take a real key from your pocket and apparently use it to wind up the deck. Then pass the key and deck to someone with the request that he or she wind it up a little more. The attempt should elicit ample amusement.

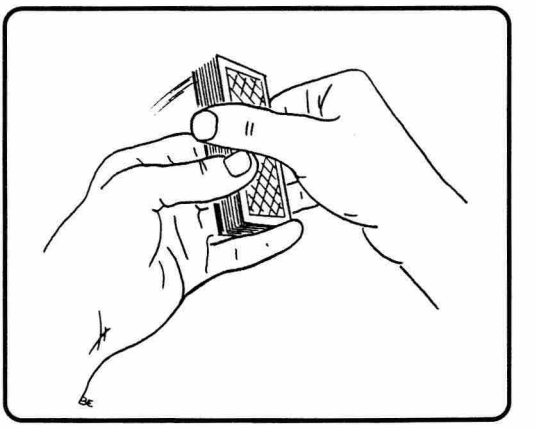
The comical sound is not difficult to produce. Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position, but with the index finger curled underneath. Place the real or imaginary key against the center of the top of the deck. Then rotate the right hand counterclockwise at the wrist, as though winding up a mechanical device. At the same time, loudly riffle the outer left corner of the deck off your left thumb, synchronizing the sound to the right hand's winding action. Repeat these coördinated actions several times.

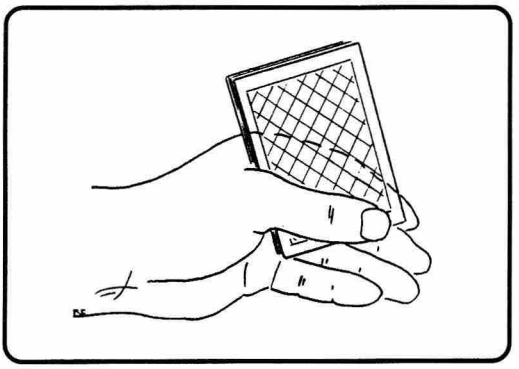


The Two-handed Fan

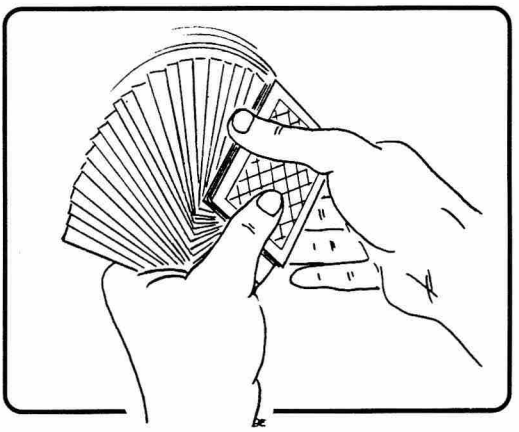
This flourish could almost be regarded as a fundamental technique, for it has both an æsthetic and a utilitarian function. It can be used anytime you want to display the backs or faces of all the cards when there is no table available. Or it can be introduced when the deck is offered for the selection or replacement of a card. For all fanning techniques the cards should be of a good quality and relatively new. Some brands fan better once the deck has been broken in.

Begin with the deck in left-hand dealing position and raise it to elevated dealing position. Simultaneously, grasp the deck with the right hand, thumb on the left side, fingers on the right, as shown in the illustration. This brings the deck to a nearly vertical position. Position the left little finger at the inner end of the deck to prevent the cards from falling from the hand, and curl the left index finger underneath.

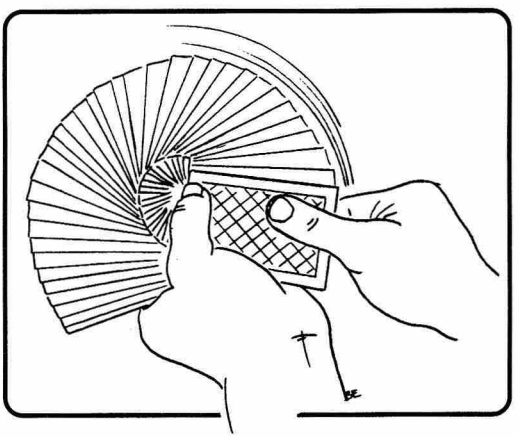




Hold the deck for an instant in the right hand as the left changes position and grasps the cards as shown in the transparent view. The deck is now deep in the fork of the left thumb. The right hand has been omitted in the illustration for clarity.



Hold the deck between the left thumb and index finger at the inner right corner, which will become the axis for the fan. Next use the right thumb to apply downward pressure on the cards, guiding them in a clockwise path to form three-quarters of a circle. The cards should slide evenly from beneath the right thumb to form a uniform fan pattern.



Once you have mastered this technique, try to open the fan with a "stretchable" axis. First move the inner end of the deck outward against the base of the index finger. Now sweep the right thumb in a semicircle, first outward and to the right, then inward again. This yields another, larger fan, which is also pretty.

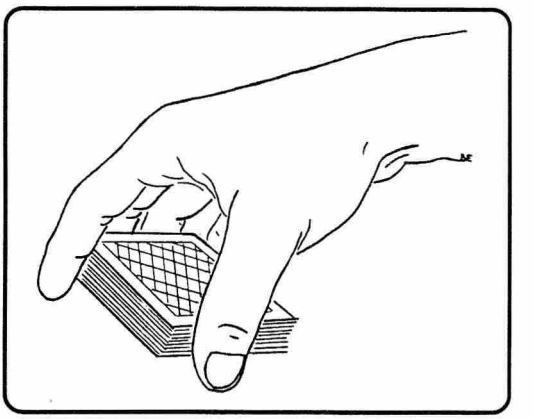
Check Points

1. The right thumb can be at the outer left corner of the deck or in the approximate center on the left side—both work. Try each position to discover which one works best for you.
2. In this, as in other fan techniques, pressure plays an important role. Experiment with various degrees of pressure, as it is extremely difficult to convey such things on paper.

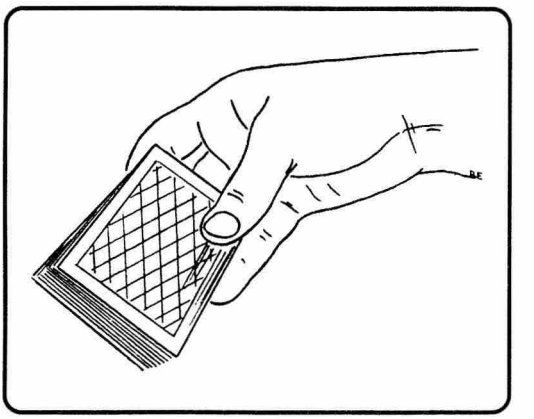
The Broad One-handed Fan

Sometimes the fan must be formed quickly, but need not be so nicely rounded. Therefore, this is the technique favored by many stage manipulators when producing a fan of cards at the fingertips. With sufficient practice, this fan looks quite pretty.

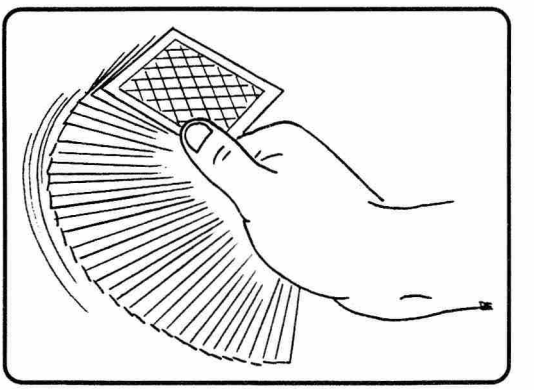
Take the deck from the left hand into the right hand, holding it with your fingers straddling the outer end, and the thumb on the inner end, as shown in the illustration.



The deck is held by pressure between the index and little fingers on the sides near the outer corners as the thumb slides to the outer right corner. At the same time, the outer phalanges of the middle and ring fingers should curl beneath the deck. As soon as the thumb is in position, it takes over control of the pack by pressing on the back of the deck. Simultaneously, the index finger moves beneath the deck.



Now begins the actual fanning action. The thumb moves in an arc to the right and upward as the index, middle and ring fingers move to the left and downward, causing the cards to spread, forming the fan.

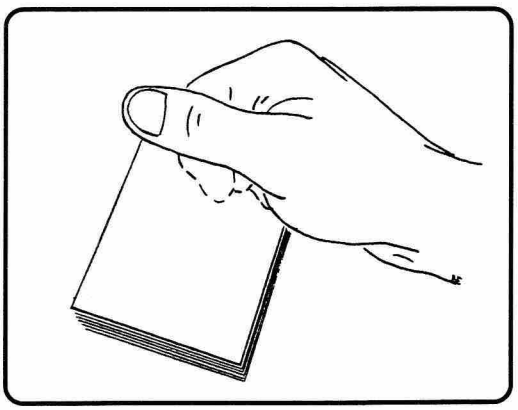


Check Points

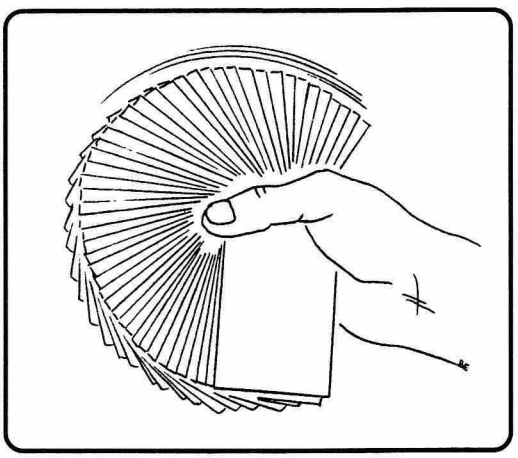
1. At first, use only half of a deck when you practice making the fan—it will be much easier. Once you have acquired the knack with a half deck, try it with the full deck.
2. Don't expect to make large fans with this technique at first. But after sufficient practice, you will see that this method is not only rapid, but makes fans that are broad and beautiful.

The Reverse One-handed Fan

This is a so-called "reverse" fan, in which the blank non-index corners of the cards are visible. If you have a blank-faced card at the face of the deck, this can be used to show the cards apparently unprinted. A color change (that is, a technique that effects a visual transformation) can then be used to turn the deck into a "normal" one, which is displayed by using the two-handed fan. (Color changes will be taught in Chapter 39 of *Volume 3.*)

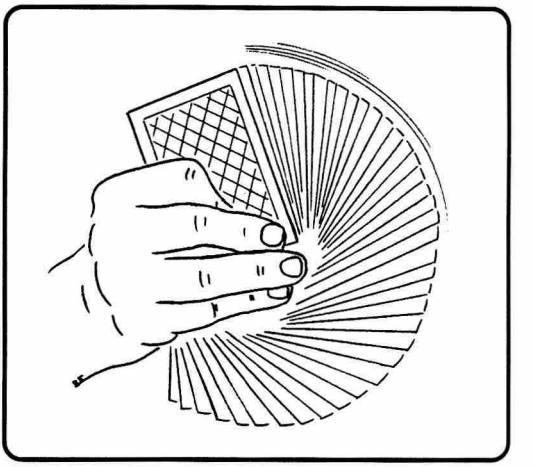


The right hand takes the deck from the left hand, as shown by the transparent view in the illustration. The thumb lies parallel to the outer end, and the index and middle fingers are tightly curled to contact the underside of the deck.



Now comes the fanning action. It is a slight motion, barely visible from the front and carried out primarily by the index and middle fingers. These fingers move in a tight clockwise semicircle, pulling the cards around with them to form the fan. As these two fingers move, the ring and little fingers follow naturally alongside, lending stability and support to the fanned cards.

This illustration shows the view from below that results if you turn your hand at the wrist. Pay close attention to the finger positions, particularly that of the index finger.



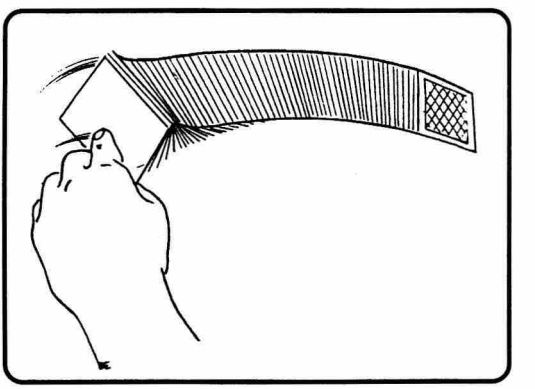
Check Points

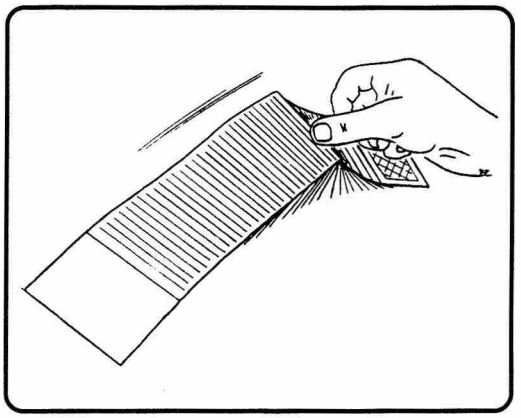
1. It will take a few days for you to gain the knack of twisting the cards properly. The action is truly nothing more than the semicircular finger-motion described. Initially you will try to make the circle too large, resulting in a fan that isn't perfectly round. The tighter the arc, the more perfect your fan will be.
2. Of course, it is the correct pressure of the fingers that produces the fan. Try it first with medium pressure. You may need to try more or less pressure, depending on the quality of the cards.

The Ribbon Spread Turnover

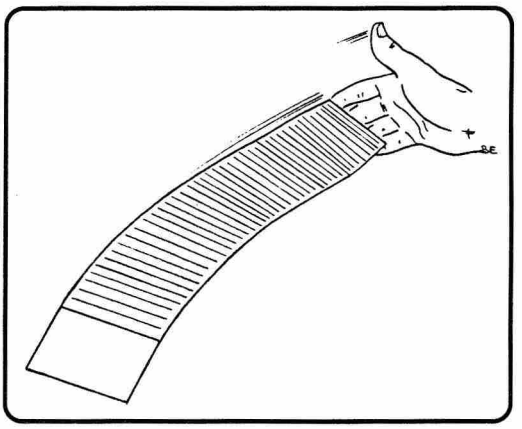
This flourish is easy, but has an extremely strong effect on an audience. You already know how to make the ribbon spread, as it was taught on page 35. I will describe here several ways to complete the flourish or amplify its effect.

Ribbon spread the cards face down from left to right and, with the tips of your left fingers, raise the left side of the bottom card of the spread until this card reaches a vertical position, its right side still in contact with the table.

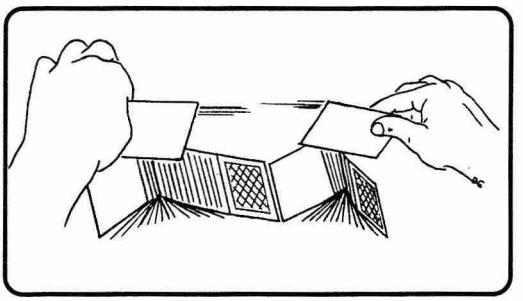




Press your right thumb (or index finger) lightly against the raised edge of the card. This gives you complete control over the card. Move the thumb (or index finger) to the right, letting it ride along the crest of the turning spread. This action brings each card in turn to a vertical position and then face up on the table.



Let the top card fall onto the extended right fingers as it flops over. Then use the right fingers to scoop up the spread from right to left and place it face down in left-hand dealing position. The cards can be turned back and forth several times with either hand before you gather and square them.



Here is a somewhat more flamboyant version. When the right hand reaches the center of the turning spread, place the left thumb (or index finger) behind the right thumb (or index finger) at the crest of the cards. Now move the right hand to the right and the left hand to the left. This splits the spread. The cards can then be reunited in the center, and either hand can complete the turnover. If you wish to be even more flamboyant, use the edges of two playing cards instead of your index fingers to split the spread and turn it.

CHAPTER 13

SPREAD CULL TECHNIQUES

"This trick, properly understood, thoroughly studied and performed with virtuosity, produces an enormous success. But, from beginning to end, it requires a consummate card conjurer. Otherwise, no success can be expected."

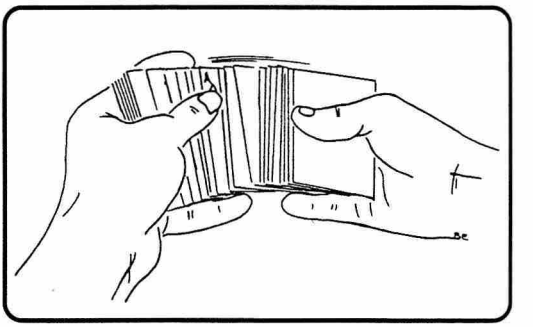
J. N. Hofzinser

A *cull* is a secret technique for arranging one or more cards at a desired location in the deck, usually at the top or bottom. The culling technique explained in this chapter has a broad range of applications. It can be used not only to control, position and transfer cards, but also to get you out of trouble when a selected card has been lost or the fourth Ace to be produced is suddenly no longer where it should be. The earliest reference to the spread cull is found in *Hofzinser's Card Conjuring*,[43] and the two applications about to be taught are generally thought to be the inventions of this nineteenth century Viennese genius.

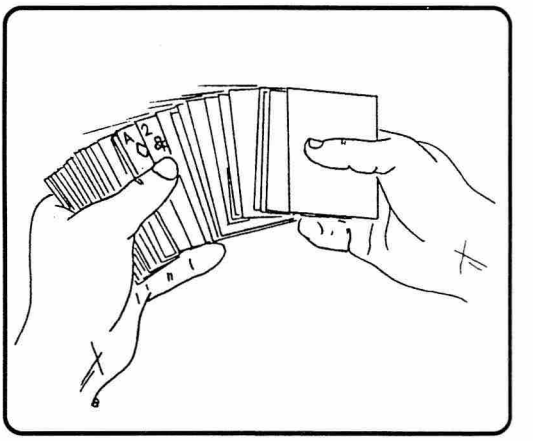
The Spread Cull

Let's assume that you are spreading the deck face up between your hands and you wish to draw the Ace of Diamonds secretly beneath the spread and bring it imperceptibly to the rear of the deck.

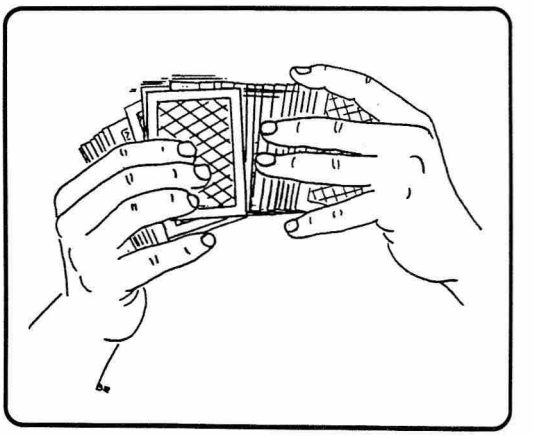
While you hold the deck face up in left-hand dealing position, use your left thumb to begin spreading the cards into your right hand. Both little fingers should move to the inner ends of the cards to support the spread. (The same considerations discussed under "Spreading the Cards in the Hands" on page 21 apply here.)

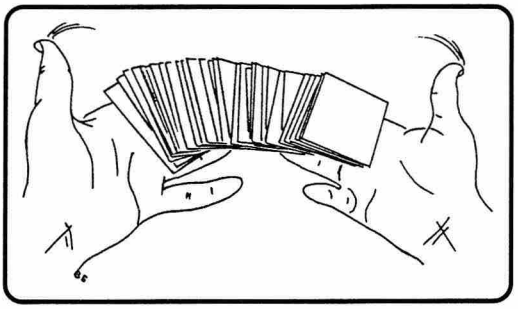


Let's say that you find the Ace of Diamonds in the middle of the deck. Place the pad of the left thumb onto the face of the card directly above and to the right of the Ace (the Two of Clubs in the illustration), contacting the left side of this card. At the same time, place the pads of the right middle and ring fingers on the back of the Ace, at its right side.



Using the right fingers, pull the Ace to the right and under the spread, as shown here from below. To release the Ace from the spread with a minimum of right-finger motion, as soon as you begin to slide the Ace to the right, shift the left thumb from the card to the right of the Ace (which it has been retaining in place) to the cards to the left of the Ace, and pull these cards slightly to the left. At that instant you should sense a soft click as the left side of the Ace springs free from the right side of the cards lying immediately below it.





The Ace is now underneath the spread. With your left thumb, continue to push cards into the right hand. You can pause at this point, allowing the spread to rest casually on the hands, as you make a remark about the shuffled condition of the deck. If you now square the cards by pushing them together, the Ace will end up at the rear of the deck.

Check Points

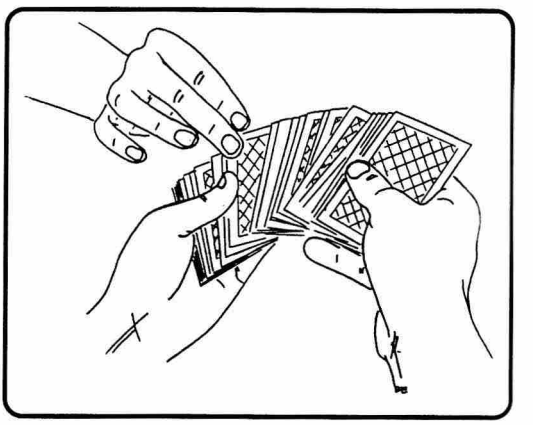
1. It is important that you look ahead in the spread as you go through the deck. This will allow you to spot the card early, then pull it under the deck without hesitation when you reach it. You want to avoid any hesitation that would seem unnatural or suspicious.
2. If you desire to bring all the Aces to the rear of the face-up deck, after culling the first Ace, continue spreading through the cards until you reach the next Ace. The previously culled Ace remains under the spread and the indifferent cards travel over it as they are pushed into the right hand. At this point you will notice that the card under the spread forms a V-shaped opening at the left, which can be seen from the front. To conceal the opening, after culling the first Ace, use the left thumb to push the subsequent cards forward for roughly an inch as they are spread to the right. This widens the spread to nearly one and a half cards, effectively masking the culled card from view. As soon as you come to the next Ace, cull it just as you did the first. The second Ace will slide automatically beneath the previous one. Continue in this fashion until all four Aces are under the spread; then push the spread closed into the right hand. The Aces are now at the rear of the deck.
3. It is very difficult to spread the cards evenly and with a smooth tempo while culling one or more cards. The solution is to find a rhythm. Imagine that the cards you spread between your hands are a concertina or small accordion. The left hand pushes the cards to the right and the right hand pulls them farther to the right, the hands moving apart to "open" the spread. Then the hands move toward each other, lightly pushing the cards together, so that the right hand can take the next few. These together-and-apart movements alternate smoothly. If appropriate to the presentation at hand, the flow can be interrupted periodically: *"I'm going to remove the two Jokers from the deck...whenever they stay in the deck...the trick doesn't work."* The ellipses show pauses in your speech, during which you look at the audience. The culling of the card under the spread is executed as you open the spread again slightly and look up. Searching through the cards and executing the cull should take about ten seconds without interruption; slightly longer otherwise. The rhythm with which you spread the cards is more important than the actions of the fingers—I stress this again as it is the real key to success with this sleight.

4. Here are a few justifications for spreading the cards: (a) You are removing the two red Kings, which you will use in the forthcoming effect. (b) You are looking for the Jokers. (c) You explain that shuffling the cards places them in a precise mathematical arrangement with fifty-two factorial possible combinations; that is, one times two times three...etc., all the way to fifty-two. (Some people will need so long to absorb this statement that you could arrange all fifty-two cards while waiting for them to catch up!) (d) Ask a spectator to remove a card from the deck. There are, of course, many verbal strategies possible, but those cited should suffice to make clear the concept.

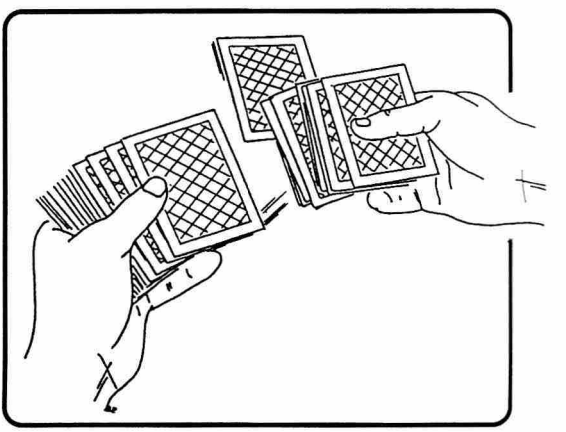
The Under-the-spread Force

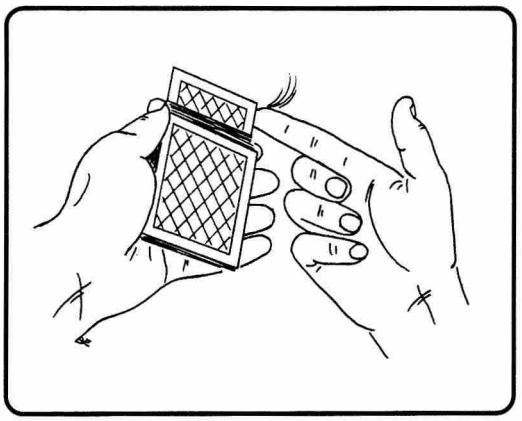
The spread cull technique is ideally suited for forcing a known card. The basic idea has been around a long time and, as mentioned earlier, is often ascribed to J. N. Hofzinser.[44] The specific handling taught here is based on that of the skilled British magician Fred Robinson,[45] who some years ago taught it to me personally. Over the course of time I have made a few minor changes that I think worthwhile.

Bring the card you wish to force—say, the Seven of Clubs—to the top of the deck. Then overhand shuffle four cards onto the Seven, injog the next card and shuffle off. With your right thumb, form a break below the injogged card and shuffle off to the break, throwing the balance of the deck on top. This positions the Seven of Clubs fifth from the top. Begin to spread the deck between your hands and ask that a spectator just touch a card. As you say this, cull the Seven under the right hand's spread and continue to push cards to the right.



As soon as your spectator has touched a card, outjog it from the spread for about half its length. Next, push the spread cards above the outjogged selection to the right, making it look as if the projecting card is being supported from below by the right fingers. Then, with the left hand, table all the cards to the left of the touched card.





Transfer the right hand's spread cards to the left hand, pushing them together, so that they can be held in dealing position. This will automatically position the Seven of Clubs directly beneath the outjogged card touched by the spectator. To justify the transfer of the cards to the left hand (without emphasizing it), gesture with your right hand as you explain, *"You could, of course, have touched any card, but you chose this one."* Here, without exposing the face of the projecting card, tap it with your right index finger.

"Please remember the card—I don't want to see it." With these words, turn your head to your left and take the left hand's cards into right-hand end grip. This automatically squares the projecting card with the rest of the packet. Raise the packet, permitting the audience to see the Seven of Clubs on the face. The illustration shows what your audience sees. Blindly reach with your left hand (remember, your head is turned away) for the tabled packet and, on locating it, drop the right hand's cards onto it in small packets. Now turn your head to face the audience again and square the deck on the table.

Check Points

1. I've suggested that you position the force card fifth from the top. If you're more comfortable with another position farther down in the deck, by all means use that.
2. Instead of going from a known position, you can also cull the force card from a break.
3. Whether you do the spread cull with a force card from a known position or from a break, you needn't look at the cards while culling it. If you have the force card fifth from the top, as suggested, you may wish to execute the double push-over taught in Chapter 14 (page 211) twice, then steal the next card beneath the spread. All this can be done by touch alone while conversing with spectators.

TRICKS WITH THE SPREAD CULL

The Magic Phone Number

Effect

The spectator touches four cards, which are turned face up in the deck. According to the performer, they represent a magic telephone number. When the cards next to the freely chosen cards are revealed, they are found to be the four Queens. This plot is Edward Marlo's borrowed from his trick "A Good Number".[46]

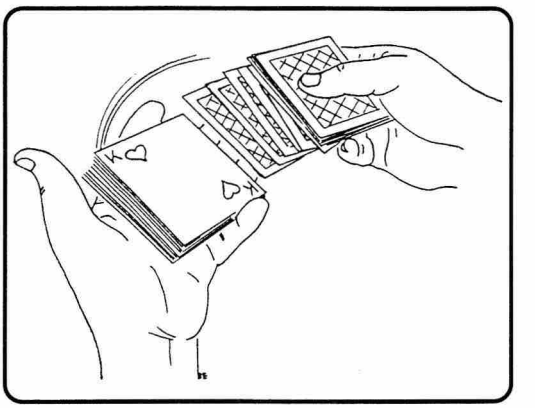
Preparation

In the course of a previous effect or during a break in the performance, secretly bring the four Queens to the top of the face-down deck, using the spread cull or another strategy.

Construction, Management and Script

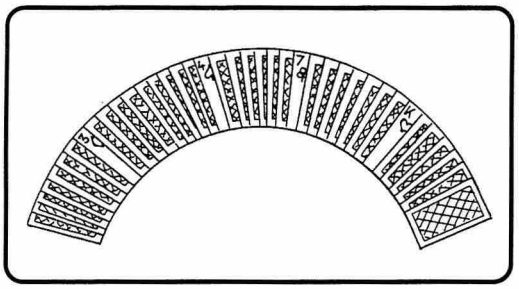
Overhand shuffle four indifferent cards onto the four Queens. Then spread the cards between your hands and ask a spectator to touch one. As you do this, cull one of the Queens under the spread. Since it is irrelevant which Queen is culled first, you can almost do this without looking at the spread. Try to restrict the first selection to the top quarter of the deck. (This is not critical, but it is more practical and clear cut.) As soon as the spectator has touched a card, divide the deck at the selection, making it the top card of the left hand's portion. The culled Queen still lies secretly under the right hand's spread.

Use the left edge of the right hand's cards to flip the selected card sidewise and face up, like the page of a book, on the left hand's portion. Assume it to be the King of Hearts.

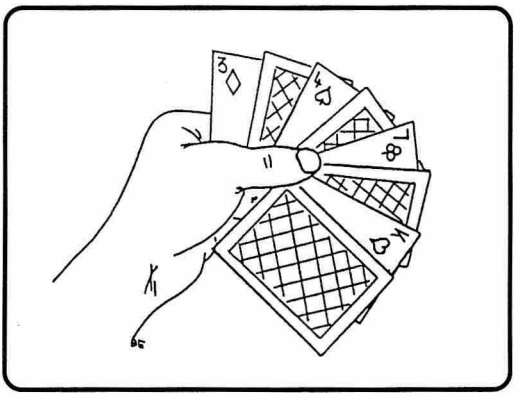


Drop the right hand's cards onto the King and square the deck. This secretly loads the first Queen over the spectator's face-up selection.

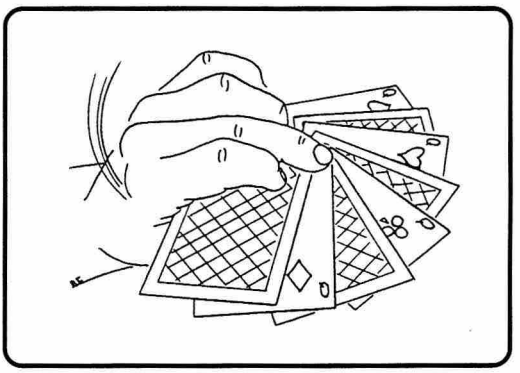
Repeat the above sequence three times, using either the same individual or three other spectators. This places three more face-up selections in the deck, each with a Queen loaded face down above it. Culling the Queens can be done without looking at the cards, if you consistently cull the fifth card from the top.



Ribbon spread the deck face down on the table to exhibit the four face-up selections. These should be spaced at roughly equal intervals in the spread. To ensure even spacing, you might restrict the selection of the second card to the second quarter of the deck, the third to the third quarter, etc.



Remove each face-up card along with the face-down card that lies just above it, and arrange these eight cards in a fan in your left hand.



Look at the fan and remark, *"Aha, King, Seven, Four, Three. That is the magical phone number! You can dial it anywhere in the world and it will always be answered by—four attractive ladies!"* Turn over your left hand to display the underside of the fan. This reveals that the cards touched by the spectators have somehow magically located the Queens.

As You Like It

Effect

Someone shuffles the cards, then freely thinks of any value in the deck. Let's say the Fours are chosen. The magician cuts the shuffled deck into four packets and shows that the bottom card of each is a Four!

Construction, Management and Script

Take the shuffled deck from the spectator and ask him to name any value. Emphasize this by turning the deck face up and spreading it quickly between your hands: *"Any value at all. It makes no difference which. The Sixes, Sevens, Eights, whatever you like."* Assume

that the spectator names the Fours. *"You could, of course, have named any other value, but you have chosen the Fours. You will admit that I could not have known this in advance."* As you say this and are waiting for the spectator's response, it should be a simple matter to look through the face-up cards and spread cull the Fours to the rear of the deck.

"I will now cut the deck, which you shuffled yourself, into four approximately equal packets." As you are saying this, you turn the deck face down and form a left little-finger break under the top card. Next take the deck into right-hand end grip, transferring the break to your right thumb. With your left hand, cut a small packet—something less than a quarter—from the bottom and place it on top of the deck. This is the first phase of a double cut (page 95). *"It really doesn't matter how many cards are in each packet—about that many will do."* As soon as the packet is placed on top, cut off and table all the cards above the break with the right hand. The rest of the deck will automatically lie in left-hand dealing position.

This simple procedure has placed the first Four on the bottom of the tabled packet.

As soon as the spectators' attention has shifted to the tabled packet, form a left little-finger break under the new top card of the deck and repeat the cutting sequence, setting another packet onto the table next to the first. Repeat the procedure twice more. This places four packets on the table, and the bottom card of each is a Four. A few cards remain in your left hand. Turn these face up and spread them between your hands. *"And, of course, I could have cut anywhere, at any of these cards."*

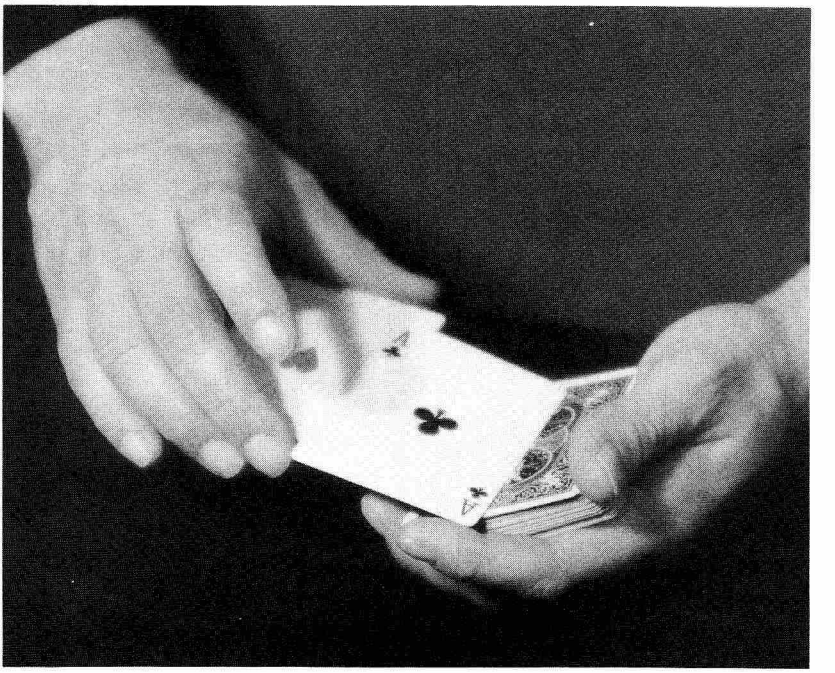
Pause briefly and smile as you look at the spectators—then nod your head. This is meant to communicate to the spectators that something extraordinary awaits them. Some may now guess that you have cut to the chosen value. You need only turn the packets over one after another to confirm their suspicions and consummate the astonishment of your audience!

CHAPTER 14

USEFUL AUXILIARY SLEIGHTS

"Few things are impossible to diligence and skill."

Samuel Johnson

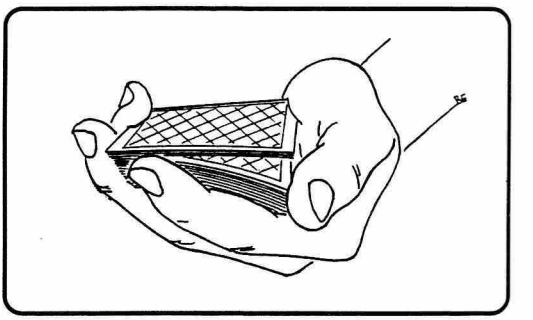


This chapter describes several useful sleights that vary in degree of difficulty and do not easily fit another chapter topic. No tricks using them are given here, but they will be employed frequently in effects taught in subsequent chapters.

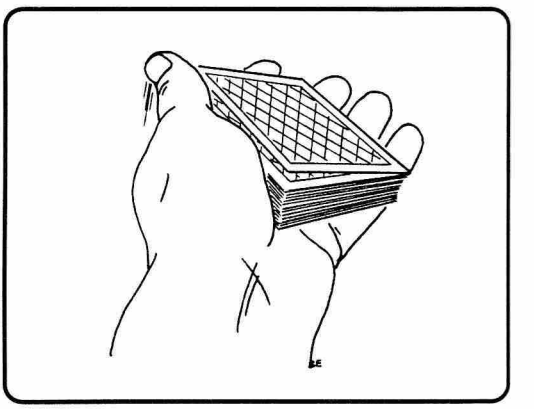
Thumb Counting

In this technique, the left thumb secretly counts a specific number of cards. Theoretically, you could count any number, but in practice the number is generally limited to less than a dozen. The cards can be counted from the top of the deck, or from the top of a break in the deck.

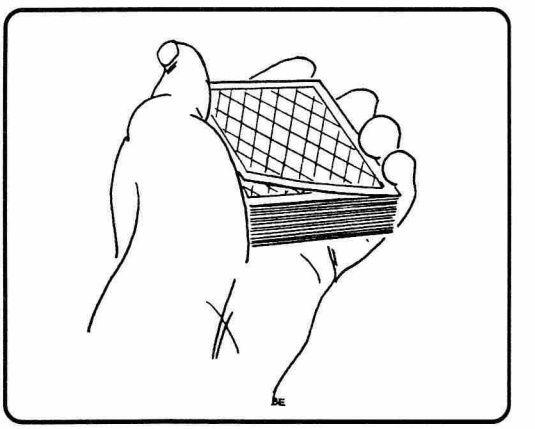
Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position and, with your left thumb, exert a gentle downward pressure on the outer left corner. Counter pressure is provided by the left index finger, its middle phalanx contacting the lower edge of the outer end of the deck. These pressures allow the thumb to release cards one at a time from the top of the deck. The illustration shows a view from the front.

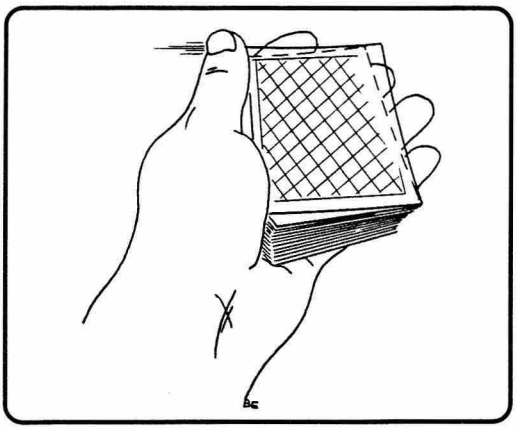


Often it is desirable to take a break at the inner end of the deck under the cards released by the thumb. Here is a very direct way to transfer the break to the heel of the thumb: With your left thumb, lift the released cards a fraction of an inch, counter-pressure being provided by the index and middle fingers at the front and right edges of the deck. The cards will open along the left side of the deck , but remain flush with the deck on the right side.

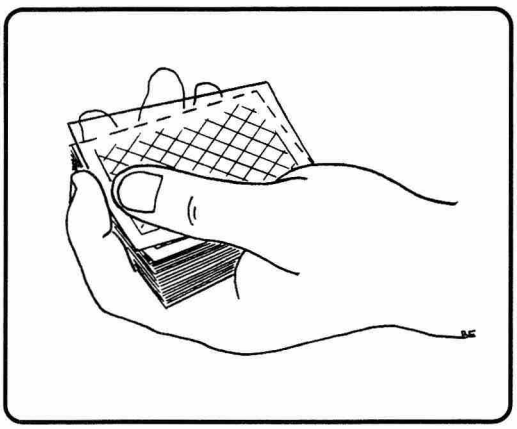


Press against this opening with the heel of the left thumb, then immediately place the thumb on top of the cards, pressing them gently down against the outer left corner of the deck. This creates a break at the inner end, which is held by the heel of the left thumb and is visible only from behind, provided the inner left corners of the separated cards are kept level and are not allowed to bend upward like a ski-jump.



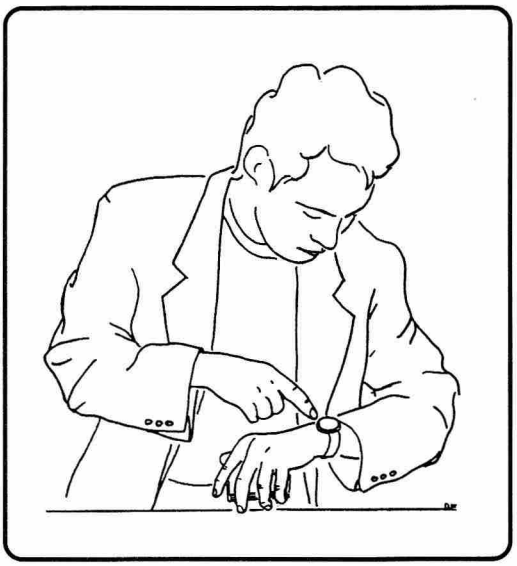


In this next, slightly more demanding method, the break is transferred to the little finger. With your left thumb, push the separated cards in a squared block to the right. The lower right edge of this block will glide across the tip of the left middle finger. Press lightly against the top of the block with the left ring finger.



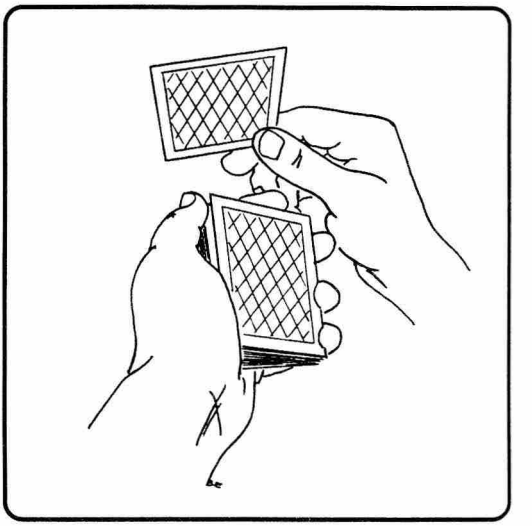
Relax the pressure of the left thumb and move the thumb over on top of the deck, pressing down on the block to secure it. Relax the ring finger's pressure. A break between the block and the rest of the deck will open along the entire right side of the deck. Pick up the break with the pad of the left little finger as the other fingers lightly square the deck.

Here are some suggestions for the management of this technique:



Openly look at your watch as you remark that this trick takes just a few seconds. If this does not fit into your presentation, it should not be too difficult to find another pretext. Count the cards off while your left hand is palm down. Returning the hand to its normal position provides the ideal cover for transferring the break to the little finger or the heel of the thumb. In any case, both the counting and the transfer are covered naturally.

The right hand displays a card, holding it in front of the deck. This provides sufficient cover to count off several cards as well as to transfer the break as described.



Turn to make a remark to the spectator sitting farthest to your left. This twists your body to the left, bringing the left side of the deck naturally and unsuspiciously out of the spectators' line of sight. The illustration shows a spectators' view from the front.

If you are sitting on a chair or at a coffee table and adopt a relaxed body position, the left hand will automatically assume a posture that covers the thumb count. The illustration again shows a view from the front.

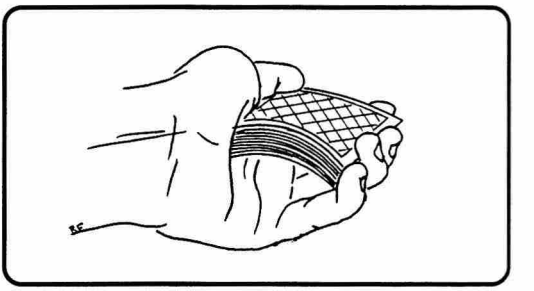
Check Points

1. Don't curl your index finger under the deck. This would signal the method to observant spectators. It is also completely unnecessary, as the index finger can apply sufficient pressure when held naturally at the outer end of the deck as shown.
2. The thumb count is executed quietly and should not be heard.
3. The transfer techniques described are basically one-handed, but you should also think about how the right hand might be used, as it can greatly facilitate the process of transferring breaks.

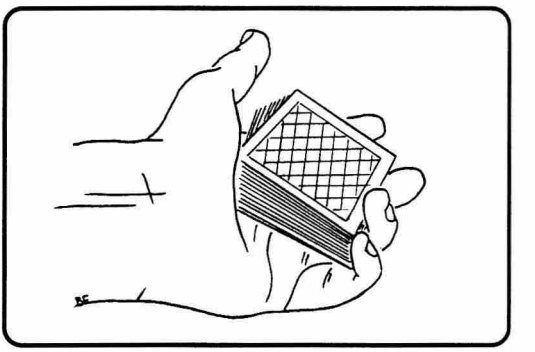
The Little-finger Count

This technique has the same goal as thumb counting, namely to count a specific number of cards secretly, and possibly to hold a break under them. The little-finger count is significantly more difficult to master than the thumb count, but is in many situations more direct and natural, and therefore superior.

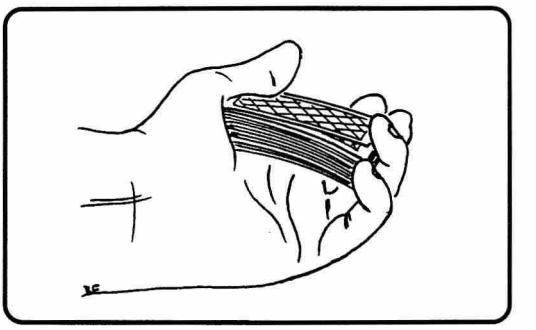
Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position. To make sure that the execution of the technique is not hindered, briefly but firmly press the deck against the heel of the left thumb with the left middle, ring and little fingers, giving the deck a slight convex bow. If necessary, you can briefly press the left index finger against the bottom of the deck to provide upward pressure. This procedure can also be carried out with both hands, but be sure to do so unobtrusively. Once you have mastered the technique, this preparation will be unnecessary.



Now press the left little finger lightly against the right edge of the deck, beveling the cards diagonally outward and to the left against the left thumb. Study the illustration carefully: the bevel is exaggerated for clarity. You might say the deck has been given a clockwise twist. In the illustration, the left thumb has been moved aside to display the bevel more clearly. In practice, it would lie on top of the deck as in the next illustration.



With the left little finger, press lightly down on the inner right corner of the deck. Once there is sufficient tension (very little is required), release a card from the little finger. The cards spring up at the very corner of the deck. This corner doesn't contact the little finger at the center of the finger pad, but a bit to the left of it; that is, more toward the side of the finger. The little finger's pressure is vertically downward. When this is relaxed, you can hold a little-finger break under the desired number of cards you have released. You can also transfer the deck to right-hand end grip at this point, letting your right thumb take over the break.



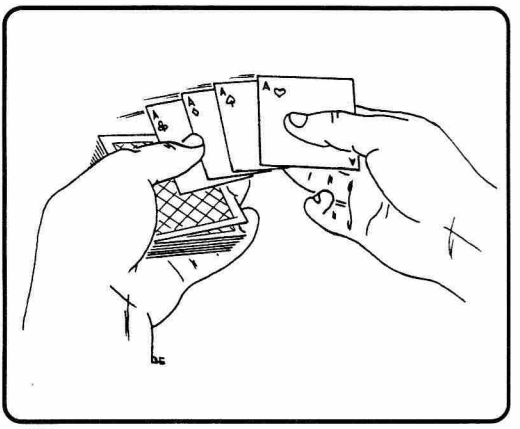
Check Points

1. Do not place the left thumb alongside the deck. Use it to help in gripping the deck in the fork of the thumb, pressing lightly down on the top card. The middle and ring fingers do not participate in the counting; instead they rest gently along the right side of the deck. The outer phalanx of the left index finger extends above the upper edge of the outer end of the deck, pressing down lightly on it.
2. The exact position of each finger is most important, although it will vary depending on the size of your hand. As soon as possible, find the position that optimizes the relative strengths of the fingers. Once you have found it, you can use the techniques described above to let several cards spring off.
3. Once a few cards have been released, the control of single cards becomes easier. The precise and certain release of the top few cards will be difficult at first. This is normal, so don't become discouraged. After a few days you, too, will gain the knack of releasing the top cards with precision.
4. When your hand begins to tense up, stop practicing and try it again a few hours later.
5. There is a subconscious tendency for the left arm to tense up, and in some cases the entire body will do so. This body language can signal that you are doing or have done some secret action. To avoid such telltale tension, when learning the little-finger count take a short break when you feel your hand and arm tensing, taking your practice in short but regular intervals.
6. Your little finger's strength is less important than your ability to control its movement independent of the other fingers. Contrary to popular belief, strength plays a secondary role in this technique. It is the *deliberate motion* of the little finger that is critical. If you type or play piano, you will know what I mean.
7. The little-finger count is obviously a very good way to get ready for a multiple lift or turnover of cards (double and triple lifts, etc.), especially those using a push-off technique, which will be taught in Chapter 21 (*Volume 2*).
8. The little-finger count is the best method for locating and obtaining a break under a corner-shorted card, a variety of key card that has two of its corners slightly shortened. No other procedure gives the same result with so little movement. This application was pointed out to me by the skilled and very funny American performer, David Williamson.
9. The little-finger count is also the most direct method for obtaining a break above or below a corner crimped card; that is, a card with a mild bend in one corner (see Chapter 22, *Volume 2*). As in the previous note, this is not strictly speaking a count, but rather a downward pressure on the relevant portion of the deck. However, the action is identical to the count.
10. A card control: Have a card chosen by allowing the spectator to call *stop* as you riffle the outer left corner with your left thumb. Have the card removed. As the card is being noted, with your left little finger secretly count ten cards from the top of the deck and hold a little-finger break beneath them. Then use the riffle force technique taught on page 224 to have the selection replaced beneath the top ten cards, positioning it eleventh from the top. This is the most direct control for such effects as Spelling and Stop tricks (an example of the later will be taught in Chapter 45, *Volume 4*).

The Secret Addition of Cards

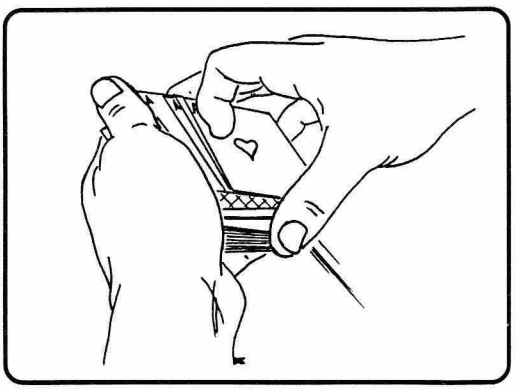
This technique secretly allows you to add additional cards to a packet. Pay close attention to the dynamic use of the gaze. This aspect of the technique was formulated by the brilliant Spanish magician Juan Tamariz and adds considerably to the deception.

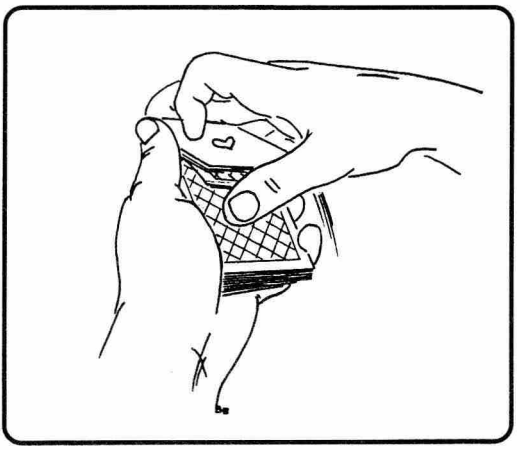
Let's assume that you are displaying the four Aces face up and wish to add three face-down indifferent cards beneath them in the process. Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position, with the left little finger holding a break under the top three cards. (How you arrive at this position will be discussed in the Check Point.) Display the four Aces, spread face up in your right hand. A portion of the spread rests on the deck, as shown in the illustration. For the purpose of this description, the order of the Aces from face to back is Hearts, Spades, Diamonds and Clubs.



Push the Aces slightly together to the left, so that the left thumb can hold them against the deck—offset diagonally, forward and to the right—as you make an explanatory gesture with your right hand. For example, you might spread four fingers to emphasize that the trick will use the four Aces. As you do this, look directly at the audience. The motion of the right hand helps shift attention from the deck to your eyes. The illustration shows an audience view from the front.

Maintain eye contact with the audience as you move your right hand into end grip position over the deck. With your right thumb, contact the inner end of the cards above the break as you press the Aces lightly against the deck with the outer phalanx of the curled right index finger. Simultaneously, contact the outer end of the Aces with the right middle and ring fingers, placing the right little finger along the right side of the Ace packet, near its outer right corner.





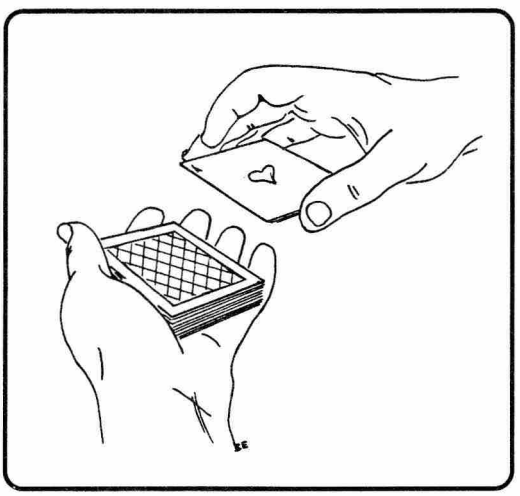
Place your left thumb on the left side of the deck and tighten the right thumb and fingers a bit on the ends of the cards as you move the right hand slightly upward and, at the same time, outward and to the left. It should look as if you are simply lifting the unsquared Ace packet to the tips of the left fingers to be squared briefly. This automatically adds the three cards above the break to the underside of the face-up Ace packet. Square the packet at the fingertips. Handled in this way, the aces never seem to come completely over the deck.

Check Point

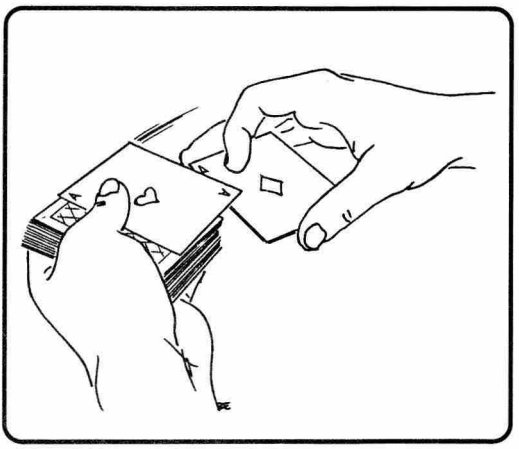
The break under the top three cards can be obtained during a preliminary phase with either a thumb count or little-finger count. Or you can simply place the four Aces face up on the deck and spread them to display their faces. In doing this you casually spread over the top three face-down cards as well. In closing the spread, take a little-finger break under the top seven cards; then with your right hand lift all the cards above the break to the left fingertips, as described above.

The Braue Addition

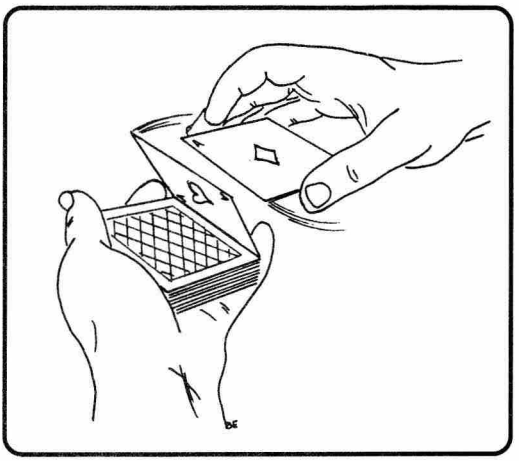
This technique often follows the one just described and serves, in our example, to exchange three secretly added indifferent cards for three of the four Aces. The method taught here is based on an idea of the well-known American card expert Frederick Braue, an authority in this field in the 1940s and 1950s.[47]



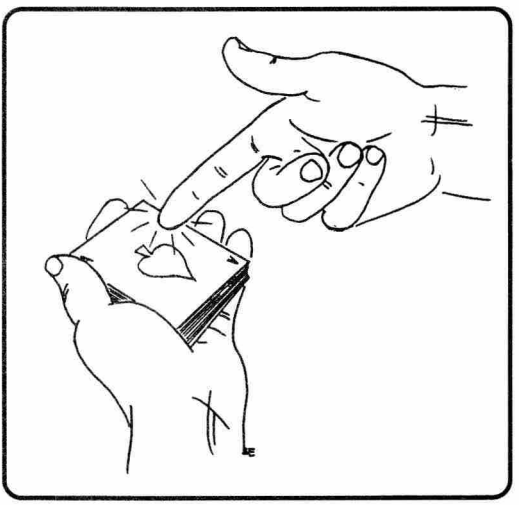
Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position while in your right hand you grasp the packet of four face-up Aces and three hidden face-down cards in end grip. Pay close attention to the finger positions. The right thumb and middle finger are nearly parallel to the surface of the cards, while the index finger is curled in. This completely masks the outer end of the packet from the spectators while displaying as much of the cards as possible. In using the left thumb to square the right hand's packet, bevel the lower cards toward the right. This makes the left edge of the packet appear much thinner, so that the extra cards will not be suspected.



Move the right hand's packet half way over the top of the deck, then place the left thumb on the face of the uppermost Ace and pull this card off to the left. As you do this, tilt the front ends of both deck and packet down bit, ensuring that the audience is able to see the face of the ace. Move your left hand forward to display the card as you name it. The left hand makes a larger motion than the right, which moves back only slightly and appears, in comparison, to be stationary.



When you have done this, use the left side of the right hand's packet to flip the Ace sidewise and face down, like the page of a book, on the deck. Repeat this procedure with the next Ace.



In drawing off and flipping over the third Ace, bring the right hand's packet partially over the deck, as you have with the other two Aces. In this case, however, continue to move the packet to the left and place it square onto the deck. Point to the face of the final Ace with your right index finger, justifying your depositing of the Ace (with three concealed cards beneath it) on top of the deck.

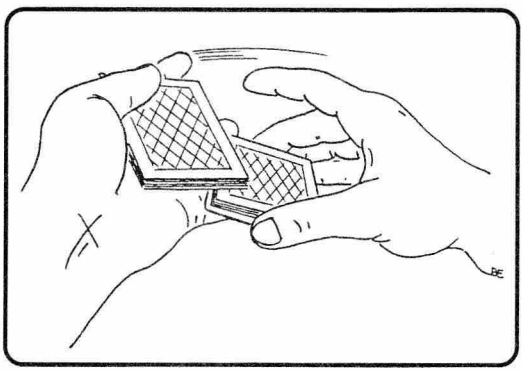
With your left thumb, push the final Ace to the right and use the right fingertips to flip it sidewise and face down on the deck. The position of the cards from the top is now Ace, X, X, X, Ace, Ace, Ace, followed by the rest of the deck. If you deal the top four cards into a face-down row on the table, they will, of course, be the top Ace and three indifferent cards.

Check Points

1. The display and turnover of the Aces is performed at a steady pace. The only breaks in the action, brief ones, occur as each Ace is pulled onto the deck and displayed while being named.
2. Pay close attention to the right fingers' positions. The cards should be held openly, but without allowing a clear view of the outer end of the packet. This prevents an observant spectator from noting the additional thickness of the cards.
3. As you draw off and display the Aces, tilt the front ends of the packet and deck down slightly, so that your audience can see the faces of the cards. It is rather pointless if you are the only person in the room who can appreciate their display. However, don't tilt the packet and deck so severely that you become hunchbacked. This can easily happen when you are seated at a table, rather than standing. You can remedy the problem by sitting on a pillow or phonebook to increase your height at the table. Other solutions are to perform while sitting on the floor, or to stand behind the table.
4. "Showing off" the top of one's head is another fault commonly seen when such displays are performed. You needn't lower your head to watch the display yourself. Instead, concentrate on maintaining eye-contact with your audience as you display the cards.

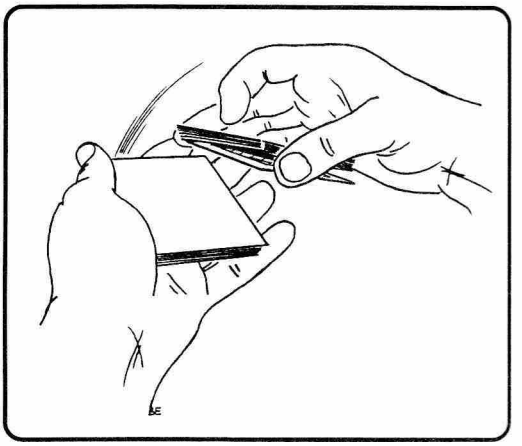
The Tip-over Addition

This technique is the invention of Stanley Collins, a gifted British magician prominent in the early decades of the twentieth century.[48] The sleight can be used to add one or more cards to a packet, perhaps as part of a switch. Let's assume that you are displaying the Ace of Hearts and wish to exchange it for the King of Spades.

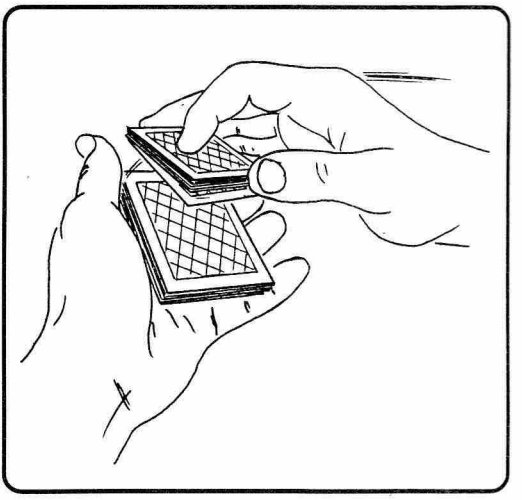


Hold the deck in left-hand dealing position. The top card is the Ace of Hearts, the bottom card the King of Spades. Form a little-finger break above the King of Spades, then take the deck into right-hand end grip, transferring the break to the right thumb. Perform a swing cut (page 27), using the right index finger to pass the upper half of the deck to the left hand.

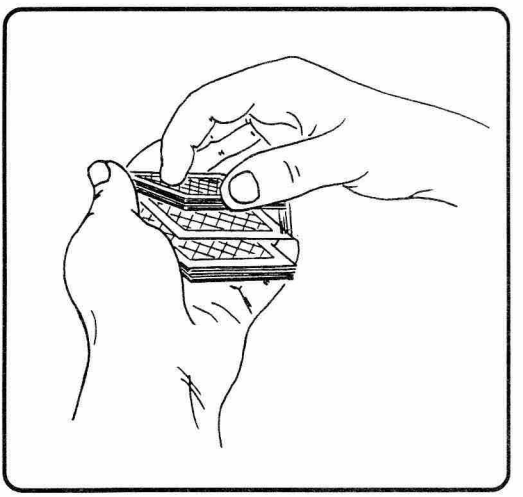
With your left thumb, push the Ace of Hearts to the right and flip it over sidewise, using the left side of the right hand's packet. This places the Ace face up on top of the left hand's packet. As you do this, tip down the outer end of the right hand's packet to condition the audience to this action. Name the Ace and briefly underscore its identity by tapping its face with your right middle finger.

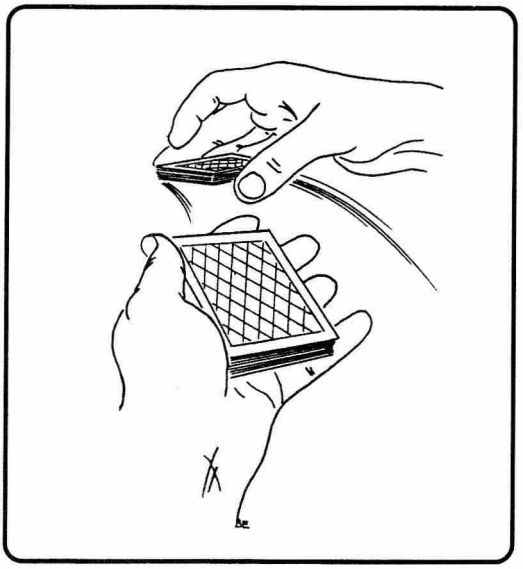


Apparently use the same action to turn the Ace face down again. As you flip the Ace over, follow it with the right hand, bringing the right hand's packet over the deck in a natural continuation of its motion.



At the moment the Ace falls over onto the deck, the right hand's packet should be only a very short distance above it. The tips of the right middle, ring and little fingers contact the upper outer edge of the left hand's packet for a fraction of a second during this action. This provides perfect cover for you to release the separated King of Spades from the right thumb, allowing it to fall onto the left hand's packet. Pull the King down onto the left hand's packet with the left ring finger, possibly using the left middle finger to aid it. The release of the card by the right hand and the left finger's pulling it down occur simultaneously. This phase lasts barely a second.





Tip the outer end of the right hand's packet down and point to a spot on the table immediately in front of the left packet. *"I will place this card... here on the table."* Depending on the requirements of the trick, you can now deal the top card of the left hand's packet, the King, onto the table. The spectators will believe it to be the Ace.

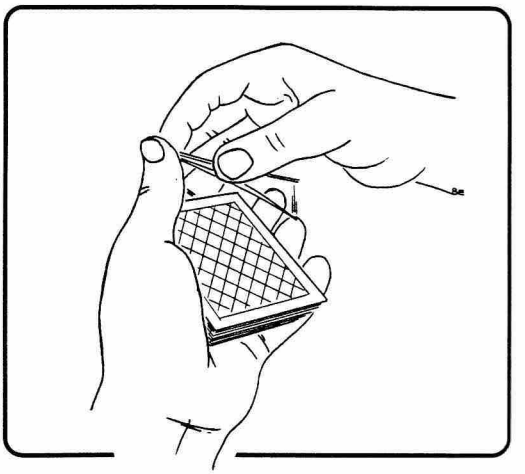
Check Points

1. Flip the Ace face up in exactly the same manner you will next turn it face down. The tipping of the right hand's packet in flipping over the Ace is particularly important in this regard. This conditioning of the spectators' perceptions is critical for the deception.
2. The dynamics of the gaze also plays a role. Look up at the spectators, then look down at the Ace of Hearts, which you are just turning face up. As you perform the secret addition during the second turnover, raise your gaze smoothly and look briefly at the audience. Then look at your left hand as it apparently places the Ace face down on the table.

ATFUS

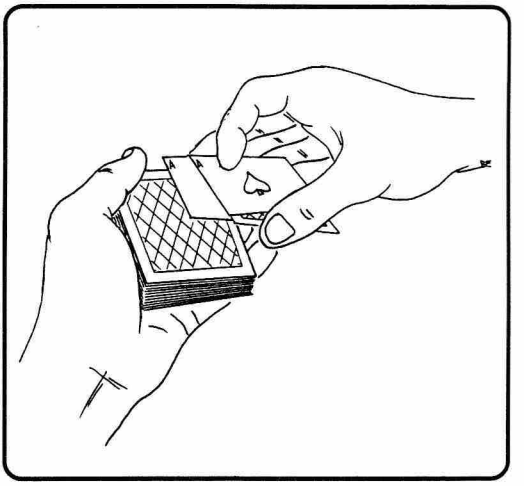
ATFUS is an acronym for "Any Time Face Up Switch", an exchange technique developed by Edward Marlo from a switching procedure invented by the brilliant British magician Alex Elmsley.[49] The ATFUS technique is extremely flexible and can be used for many purposes. For example, you can display four face-up Aces, and in the course of this action exchange two of the Aces for two face-down indifferent cards from the deck. This is the application we will use to teach the basic technique.

Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position. Have two black Kings on top of the deck. These will be switched for two of the Aces. Hold the four Aces face up in right-hand end grip, with the black Aces on the face of the packet. Using the secret addition technique explained on page 203, add the top three face-down cards of the deck beneath the Aces. Then, as shown in the illustration, use the pad of the left middle finger to pull the bottom card of the right hand's packet gently down. With your right thumb, take a break above this card.

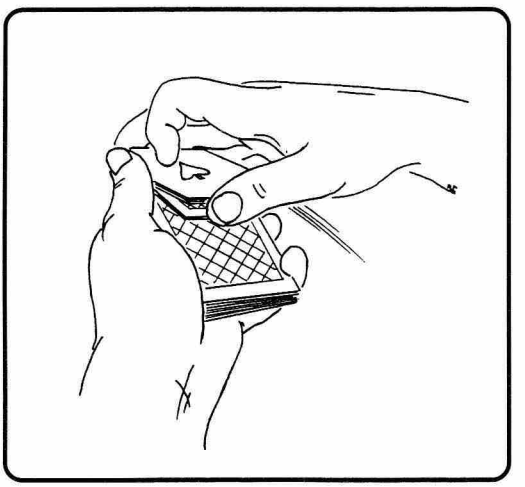


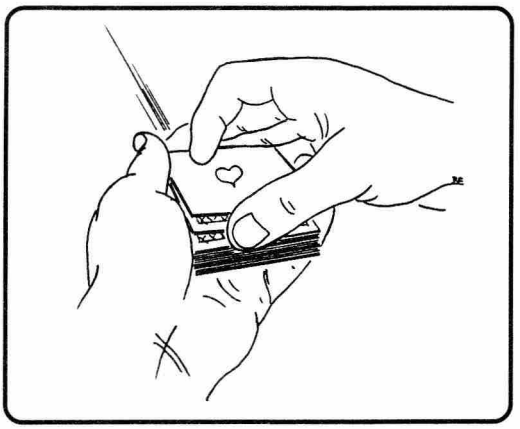
As described in the Braue addition (page 205), use the left thumb to draw the top Ace off the packet and onto the deck, which you move outward and to the left. Name the card as you pull it not square onto the deck, but onto the outer right portion of the top of the deck.

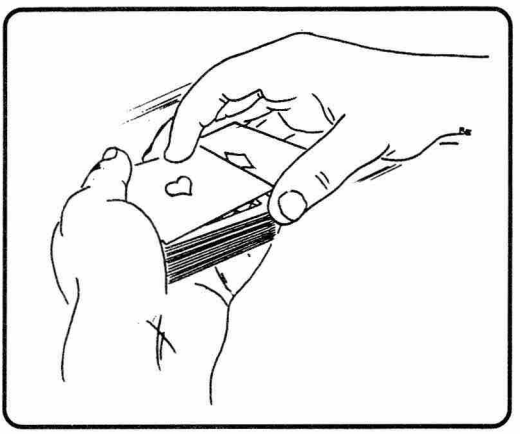
Maintain the right thumb's break as you place the right hand's packet onto the Ace just transferred, but covering only its right half. With your right middle finger and thumb, grip the Ace by its ends, holding it securely under the right hand's cards as you lift the resulting stepped packet about half an inch above the deck. Rest the bottom of the packet lightly on the tips of your left middle and ring fingers, and place the left thumb against the left side of the packet.



Slide the right hand and its packet forward and slightly to the left. The pressure of the left thumb will square the lowermost Ace with the rest of the right hand's cards.







Slide the packet inward, maintaining its contact with the left thumb, then pull the next card from the face of the packet onto the deck exactly as before. Repeat the display, replacement and squaring of the Ace under the packet as previously described. As you slide the packet back against the left thumb again, prepare to pull off the next card with the thumb. This brings the right hand's packet almost directly over the deck.

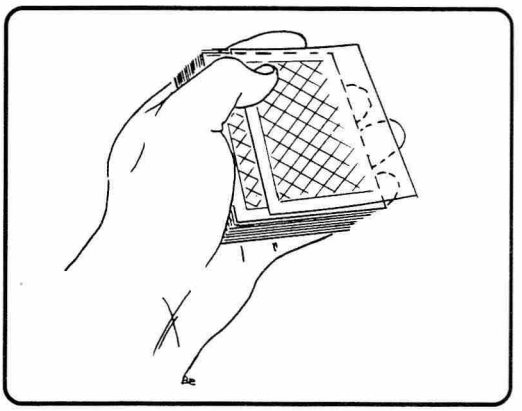
At that instant, with your left middle and ring fingers, pull the cards below the break onto the deck. *Simultaneously* pull the first red Ace from the top of the packet and onto the deck. Then replace the Ace under the right hand's packet and square it, just as before. The final red Ace is merely named. Depending on the context, the right hand's packet may be briefly placed on the deck, stepped widely to the right, where the left thumb holds it firmly in place as the Ace is displayed. In any case, the right hand's packet now consists of two face-down black kings sandwiched between two face-up red Aces.

Check Points

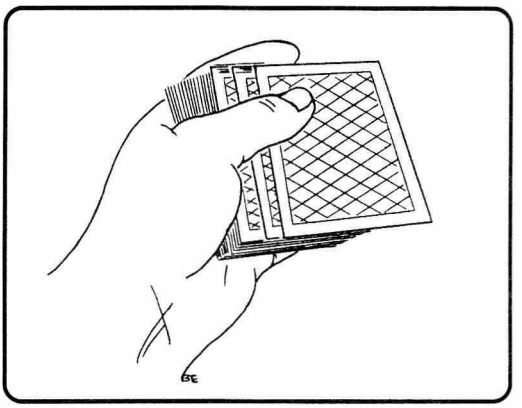
1. As the cards under the break are stolen, the right hand's packet must not appear to cover the deck completely. Pretend the top of the deck is a hot stove top that can be touched for only a split second. But that is sufficient for the cards under the break to be added onto the deck.
2. The drawing off of the Aces and the subsequent squaring of them beneath the right hand's packet is performed slowly but smoothly. Part of the secret of this technique is a steady pace and the rhythm with which the primary and secondary actions take place. The cards are stolen in a moment of secondary importance, which is sandwiched between two primary actions (the pulling off of the Ace, followed by its squaring under the packet). The primary actions are emphasized to focus attention, which is allowed to relax during the intermediate secondary action, when the cards are stolen.
3. As I mentioned at the beginning of this description, the ATFUS technique is capable of much more than the one application given here. For a fuller understanding of the breadth of this concept, you will want to read Edward Marlo's original article, which can be found in his book *M.I.N.T., Volume 1*, starting on page 60.

The Single, Double and Multiple Push-over

It is often necessary to push one card—or two or more cards as one card—off the deck or from a small packet. For example, one may wish to do this to obtain a little-finger break beneath the top two cards. Let's examine the technique that permits this.



While holding the deck face down in left-hand dealing position, bend the left thumb somewhat more sharply than usual and use it to push the top card about half an inch to the right. The thumb is only bent immediately prior to executing this technique. Before that it lies naturally on the deck.



Extend the thumb roughly an eighth of an inch farther, bringing the inner side of the outer phalanx of the thumb into contact with the second card from the top. This automatically pushes this card to the right as well. The right sides of the cards slide over the tip of the middle finger, then over the tip of the ring finger. Both fingers feel these edges and can be used to monitor the action.

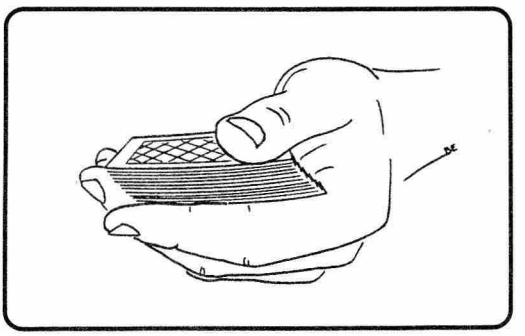
Check Points

1. After some practice you will be able to refine this technique. The distance between both cards as they are pushed over becomes smaller and smaller until they are practically pushed off aligned as a single card. In most instances where a double push-off is called for, it is not detrimental if the cards are separated by a fraction of an inch. This defect can generally be hidden by a movement or easily corrected by the right hand as it grasps the cards.
2. An extension of this technique allows more than two cards to be pushed off. It is best, in such instances, to check the result visually with a discrete glimpse.
3. The technique has numerous applications, such as dealing two cards as one ("a double deal" [Chapter 47, *Volume 4*]) or performing a double lift without a get-ready (Chapter 21, *Volume 2*).

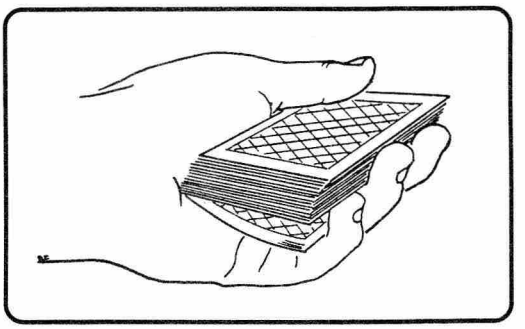
TIP: By pulling the card or cards back onto the deck, the left little finger can easily obtain a break. This is one of the most elegant and efficient one-handed methods for obtaining a break under one or more cards.

Buckling One or More Cards

You will encounter the buckle technique often in trick descriptions. The buckle can be used, among other things, to obtain a break above one or more cards and to false count a small packet of cards as an even smaller packet. Let's assume you wish to obtain a left little-finger break above the bottom card of the deck.

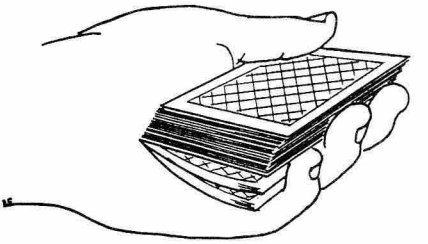


Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position and place the pad of the left index finger onto the face of the bottom card, near its outer index. With this finger, exert a slight upward and diagonally inward pressure (toward the inner left corner) on the deck. Meanwhile, maintain a downward pressure on the deck with the left thumb to hold the cards in place. The illustration shows the view from the front.



Counterpressure against the crease in the palm that borders the heel of the thumb (palm readers call this the heart line) causes the lowermost card to bow slightly and separate from the deck at the inner right corner. The size of the break will increase with an increase in pressure from the index finger. This illustration shows the same situation displayed in the preceding illustration, but from the performer's view.

If you increase the upward pressure of the index finger and bend its outer phalanx in slightly, pressure will also be applied to the cards just above the bottom card, and these cards will also separate from the deck, so that a break may be taken above them. With practice, two or three cards can be buckled with complete accuracy and confidence.



Check Points

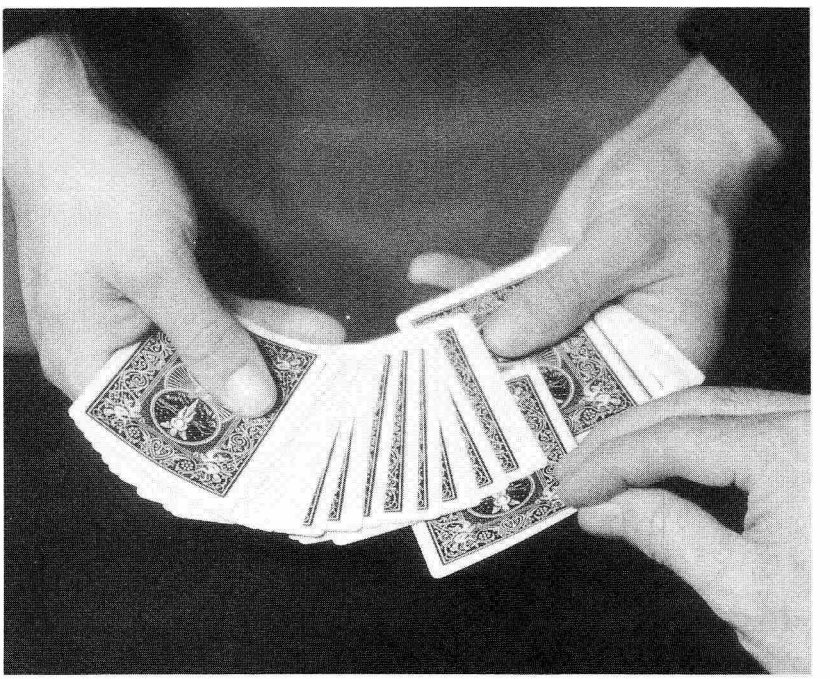
1. The action is carried out entirely by the left hand, the right hand serving only to cover the sleight by grasping the deck from above or by providing misdirection through the performance of some other action, such as turning over a card on the table or cutting a packet off the deck.
2. Properly executed, the buckle is not visible from the front. The most common error is to press the index finger toward the outer left corner rather than exerting a *diagonally inward pressure.* Sidewise pressure must cause the buckle to be visible at the outer end of the deck and exposes the curling of the index finger. To prevent this, keep the outside of the index finger, for its entire length, in contact with lower outer edge of the deck. This is a barely noticeable alteration of standard dealing grip. *Then, to buckle the card, press with the entire index finger, not just with the outer phalanx.* This is the best way to assure proper execution of the sleight.

CHAPTER 15

FORCE TECHNIQUES, PART 2

"Practice is the best of all instructors."

Publilius Syrus



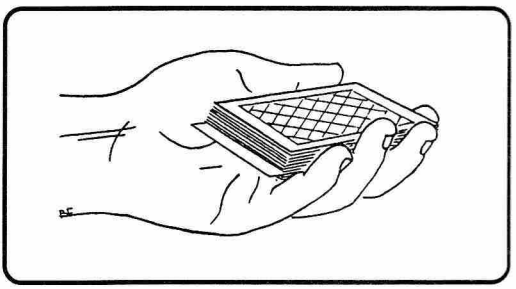
In this chapter we resume our study of methods for forcing cards by examining two advanced forces, the classic force and the riffle force. Both will require considerably more practice to master than do the forces taught in Chapter 5. However, your efforts will be extremely well spent, as these techniques are two of the most valuable in all card magic.

The Classic Force

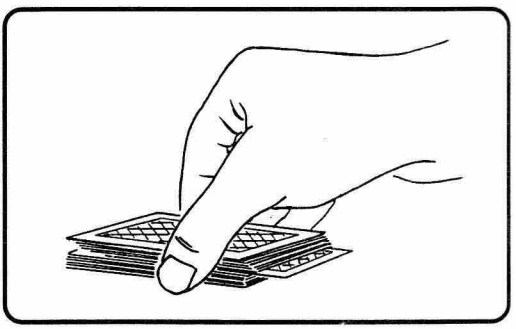
Relatively few magicians use the classic force, and even fewer so-called experts can perform it properly and without arousing suspicion. While the physical technique itself is not that demanding, it often incites a high degree of anxiety. The true difficulty lies in coördinating the movements, and in the performer's concern that the outcome is not entirely under the his control. But those few factors that introduce uncertainty can be considerably minimized through a thorough understanding of the force. This description is designed to provide precisely such an understanding and a mastery of all the factors that lead to a successful execution of the classic force. I have divided this description into three sections: First, the technique, handling and structure; second, the psychological management of the spectators; and third, the "inner game" played out in the mind of the performer. For clarity, these aspects of necessity are treated separately, but they function like interlocking gears and only achieve the desired effect in concert.

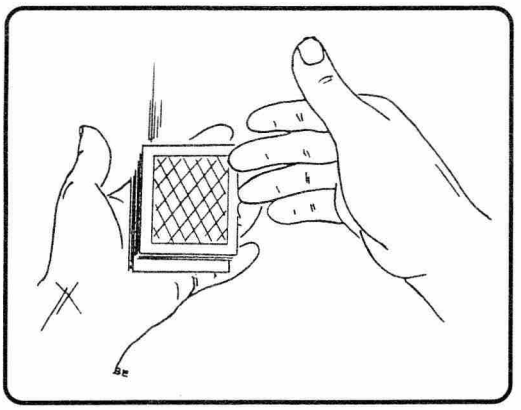
Technique, Handling and Structure

The card to be forced—for example, the Two of Spades—is the top card of the deck. Casually overhand shuffle the cards, pulling off about a quarter of the deck with the left thumb in the first shuffle action, injogging the next card and shuffling off the rest of the deck in three or four strokes. This is done while addressing the audience and without looking at your hands. After the shuffle, the deck should lie unsquared in left-hand dealing position.

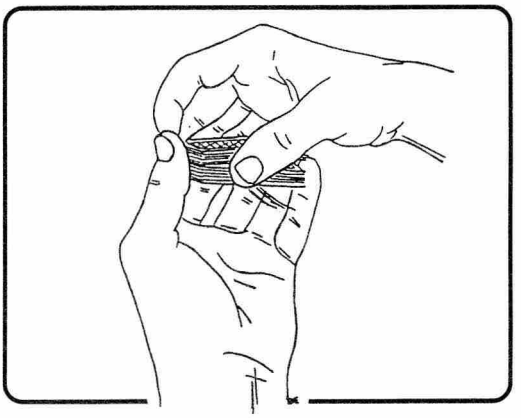


With your right hand, grasp the deck by its sides from above and set it aside on the table. The injogged card, which projects from the right end of the deck, marks the location of the Two of Spades. You may want to push the top few cards a bit out of alignment, deliberately affording more cover for the jogged card. When this is done, even someone looking from the side will perceive only an unsquared deck.

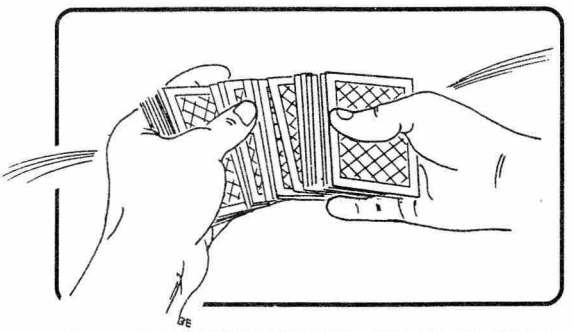




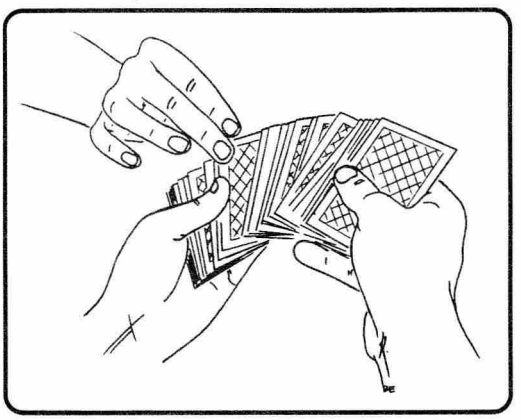
Ask two spectators to come to the table to help you with the next effect. If the spectators are already at the table, make some pertinent remark to them. Once you have welcomed them to the table or completed your remark, use your right hand to pick up the deck by its sides and let it *drop* into left-hand dealing position.



As you explain that one of the two spectators will be choosing a card, apparently notice that the deck is not squared. Square it while forming a left little-finger break under the injogged card as described in the section "Forming a Little-finger Break Under Multiple Cards" (page 31).

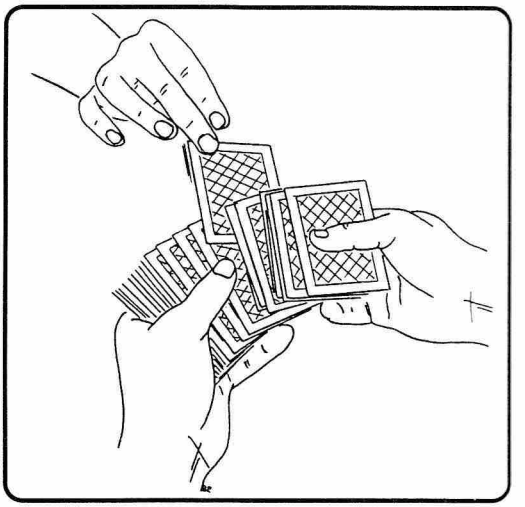


Turn to one of the spectators, spreading the cards between your hands as you request that a card be taken. Spread only ten cards, then close the spread halfway and push over the next seven or eight cards with the left thumb. This opening and closing of the spread interrupts the rhythm of the spreading and makes it more difficult for the spectator to take a card, which is to your advantage.



Spread to the break. The spectator, at this point, has been ready to take a card for some time. You capitalize on this readiness by exposing the back of the Two of Spades more than the other cards, and you slightly lift the spread, subtly bringing the back of the force card into contact with the tip of the spectator's middle finger. This should be done with sensitivity and must not be obvious. The barely perceptible lifting of the spread must be coördinated with the grasping motion of the spectator's hand so that no suspicion is aroused.

The spectator, having touched the Two of Spades, will stick with this card. Turn your head away as you say, *"Have you taken a card?"* as though one had not yet been chosen. Keep spreading the cards as you deliver this question. As the card is taken, it will feel to the spectator as if the card is freely "swimming" in the spread; that is, an impression is received of taking a card from an uncontrolled and freely handled deck.



Because the Two of Spades is still caught in the midst of the surrounding cards, the spectator will need a few seconds to "free" it from the spread (it naturally adheres to the other cards despite the release of pressure from your hands). This situation reinforces the impression of the spectator's freedom of choice. As soon as you sense that the force card has been grasped, imperceptibly draw back the spread away from the card.

Check Points

1. The entire construction is designed to maximize the interval of time between the preparation for the force and the actual selection process. This makes it practically impossible for the spectator to see a connection between the positioning of the force card (the cause) and the actual force (the effect).
2. In spreading the deck, it is extremely important that the cards above the break be prevented from being pushed over even slightly before you reach them in the spread. Even a step of a sixteenth of an inch can betray your desire to reach this location. This may only be perceived consciously by the spectator after the fact, when—having taken the force card—he or she reasons that you probably wanted to reach the visible separation. Please don't underestimate the intelligence and keen powers of observation of many spectators, who—though generally eager to coöperate—will draw the correct conclusions in these situations.
3. A trick useful for learning the classic force is "Seventh Son of a Seventh Son", page 101. (Especially see Final Note 1 on page 102.)

The Psychological Management of the Spectators

By the above, I mean the influence exerted on the spectators' thinking, so that their thoughts and deeds favor your secret goal—in this case, forcing the Two of Spades. Here we are dealing with psychological manipulation, both before and after the force.

After both spectators are seated at the table, make a few remarks relating to the theme of the effect. The spectators are already out of their element, and you enjoy the so-called "home court" advantage, which results in allowing you a subtle superiority (which must not be translated into arrogance).

Pick up the deck and form a break as described above, looking alternately from one spectator to the other as you say, *"I would like... one of you... to take a card from this deck."* Especially notice the pauses indicated in this line. You want to create an impression that this is something important. The spectators already realize that they will be given a task. But not knowing its nature and whether they be equal to it, they tend to be a little withdrawn. An exaggerated version of their inner dialogue might be: *"What have I gotten myself into this time! I really hope he picks the other guy. I can just see myself screwing up in front of everyone!"* By dividing your attention between the spectators for a few seconds, you have given these feelings a chance to develop. Then turn to the spectator on your right with the request, *"Take a card!"*

The spectator on the left is immediately relieved, as he hasn't been put on the spot, and will relax. But this is just a prelude to the surprise you are about to spring on him. After spreading about ten or fifteen cards, suddenly change your mind: *"No, wait a minute. You'll help me in a moment. Would* you *please take a card!"* Here you turn with the cards to the spectator on your left, who thought he was out of danger and is now suddenly plunged into a stressful situation. Everything has changed without warning and he must make a decision quickly to meet your request or he will look foolish (which would create even more stress for him). This decision must be made rapidly, as you have already begun spreading the cards and only about half the deck remains! So he naturally takes the first opportunity he can to reach into the spread. You have, of course, prepared for this by exposing one card in the spread somewhat more than the others (this is not the Two of Spades, but an indifferent card lying seven or eight cards above it). As soon as he reaches into the spread, keep spreading, so that the card slips through his fingers. Since you are holding the cards, it is not that easy for the spectator to take one (the cards tend to cling together).

The spectator experiences a kind of eleventh-hour panic—if he doesn't pick a card soon, it will be too late and he'll be publicly humiliated for having failed to meet such a simple request. Now you will realize why you have placed the card in the lower quarter of the deck. The individual stress factors combine here to produce frustration for the spectator. You have created an artificial situation, a controlled environment, which influences your helper to your advantage. There is, of course, no guarantee that he will actually do what you want. This uncertainty will always exist whenever you allow someone other than yourself to make a decision. But by influencing the conscious and subconscious decision-making factors, you can raise the likelihood of the Two of Spades being chosen.

Check Points

1. As Robert-Houdin noted over one hundred years ago,[50] you should use the expression *"Take a card"* rather than *"Choose a card"* when executing the classic force. Not only is the phrase more precise, but it avoids even the verbal suggestion of the freedom the spectator, in theory, enjoys. Many people believe things are as they seem and that these things can scarcely be changed by their decisions. *"Take a card"* reinforces this belief, encouraging an attitude in the spectator that works in your favor—while *"Choose a card"* might inspire unwanted hesitation and a more deliberate exercise of the spectator's freedom of choice.
2. As soon as you are sure that the spectator is taking the Two of Spades, you will naturally be relieved and delighted—especially when you are just starting out and your force is not always successful. You must, however, take great pains to hide such emotions. You must avoid any suggestion that you have succeeded at something. To borrow an expression from Juan Tamariz, you mustn't begin to cluck like a hen that has just laid an egg. After all, the spectator has only taken a card from the offered spread, which isn't all that earthshaking an event, is it? One tendency that is particularly widespread is to hand the deck to the spectator immediately after the force, saying in a triumphant tone, *"Fine. Now replace the card anywhere in the deck and shuffle it yourself!"* This would make even the dimmest spectator suspicious. It is far better to shuffle the deck briefly yourself, then casually—as though you hadn't even thought about it—ask the spectator if he might like to shuffle the cards as well. If he declines, press the deck into his hand anyway: *"No, no. Go ahead and shuffle them—I don't want you to say afterward that I cheated."*

The Inner Game of the Performer

This is clearly the most difficult aspect of the classic force. When I speak of the "inner game" I am borrowing a concept from Timothy Gallwey who, in his book *The Inner Game of Tennis* (Bantam: New York; 1975), defines an inner game as those events that are played out in the performer's mind during the performance (an artificially induced stress situation). The inner game is closely tied to the personality of each performer. Nevertheless, I believe that certain generalizations can be made that apply to everyone.

If you have read this far, you will now feel confronted with the classic problem of the millipede who tried to analyze which foot should take the first step and promptly fell on its face. If you are consciously occupied with all these anatomical, psychological and structural details, you will lose sight of the ultimate goal. This is because analysis is an intellectual endeavor governed by one human thought process, while the actual physical handling is governed by an entirely different thought process. Gallwey calls these dimensions Ego One and Ego Two; some psychologists call them the super- and subconscious, or intuition and intellect. No matter what names one uses, there are apparently two components of our personalities serving different roles. When we are unable to bring both components together in harmony, we experience difficulties.

It is clear that if you wish to apply in a conscious manner all the details I have expounded, you will inevitably fail, for the simple reason that thinking in this case proceeds more slowly than the handling requires. To prevent this, try to visualize the entire motion and its successful result. In the beginning it is necessary to understand the individual steps and to rehearse them while executing a slower version of the handling. Then comes the phase when you finally internalize the procedure, so that you can execute it without thinking (a phase reached only through practice, practice, practice).

A successful force is considerably hindered by potential enemies like fear, uncertainty, inhibition, etc. To prevent this, visualize a successful force. Be quite certain and confident that the spectator will take the card—*believe in it!* As you practice, as often as possible try to imagine the situation vividly. And please understand that if the card is not taken, it is not a disaster—for you will be prepared with previously chosen and rehearsed alternatives (which I will explain shortly) that extricate you from the situation without anyone being the wiser. These reassuring thoughts should give you the composure and confidence needed for a successful execution of the force.

You must overcome the fear of failure. The forthcoming discussion of various *outs* should nip this feeling in the bud.

How to Practice the Classic Force

Your first thought may be to practice the force on your spouse or a close friend. But such well-meaning helpers are practically useless for learning the classic force, as they don't react naturally. Knowing that something is expected of them and wishing to fulfill those expectations, they react falsely (playing out their own inner games).

The best way to learn the force is to use it as often as possible in stressful situations (at fairly important performances), executing it *whenever* a spectator chooses a card, whether or not the card needs to be forced. Always try to force the card below the break. If it fails, it makes no difference in a routine that doesn't require a force, and you can confidently conclude the trick as planned. But if the force succeeds, your self-assurance will be boosted by this secret success. Eventually, these experiences will lead to a harmonious, productive inner game, as you can always call on the memories of your successes.

HERE IS A USEFUL PRACTICE TIP: Lay a book on the edge of the table with the pages facing you. Then begin to spread the cards, offering them to the book, which plays the part of a spectator for you. When you reach the force card, push it into the pages of the book. Repeat this procedure many times, until you acquire a sure feeling for the physical actions. If you don't succeed with this force...sell the book!

Outs

The term *outs* refers to all those techniques, strategies and methods that serve to overcome a failed force. You have three basic options: You use either (1) a direct method or (2) an indirect method to put the Two of Spades into the spectator's hand, or (3) you use the indifferent chosen card for another effect, then return to the intended trick requiring the Two of Spades and attempt the force again. Let's examine these options in greater detail. In the following descriptions, when I talk about an X-card I mean a selection that results from a failed force. (The Two of Spades will continue to be our force card.)

Direct Methods

One fact is fundamental: The more techniques you have at your disposal, the more discreetly you can recover from a failed force. A certain experience and self-confidence is required for the procedure to seem spontaneous and natural. So practice the methods discussed below even when you do not need them. That way you can practice these strategies before disaster strikes.

The "Whoops!" Method

This cunning out comes again from Robert-Houdin.[51] As soon as the spectator looks at the X-card, you reproachfully exclaim, *"Whoops! I saw the card. Please don't show it to me. That makes it too easy."* With these words, take the card from your doubtless somewhat bewildered spectator, replace it in the deck and begin your force over again.

Now it is critical to assess the situation properly. Was the failed force the fault of improper technique or timing, or was the spectator simply uncoöperative? If the former is the case, make another attempt at the force, using the same spectator. In such a situation, you now have an added advantage. Some spectators reach swiftly to take a card, others move with slow deliberation. Speed varies from person to person, but an individual's speed remains constant. Having just learned the speed of your subject's actions, the second time around you can adjust yours to accommodate, confident that the person's speed will be consistent.

If, on the other hand, you sense that your subject is being uncoöperative, repeat the force on another spectator. Your excuse for changing helpers? *"Why don't we use someone sitting somewhat farther away; then I won't be able to see the card so easily."* Of course, this is nonsense, but it sounds reasonable.

Another approach is to keep the same spectator, but switch to a sure-fire force, such as the riffle force, which will be taught next. It is important, of course, that the force employed appear as free as the classic force, or the change in procedure will cause the audience to wonder why you have suddenly adopted such a strange course of action.

A Direct Exchange of the X-card for the Two of Spades

This category encompasses all the techniques in which the X-card is secretly exchanged for the force card. The top change, described in Chapter 16, is the choice best suited to the purpose, and in that chapter I will describe in detail how it is used (see page 238). Here I will explain the basic strategy with an easier but somewhat less natural method. Bring the Two of Spades to the top of the deck as soon as the spectator has removed the X-card. It is important that you instruct the spectator not to look at the card. Do this as soon as you notice that the wrong card is going to be selected. By giving the instruction so early, it appears to be part of the planned course of action. Having brought the Two of Spades to the top of the deck, take the as yet unseen X-card from the spectator and place it briefly onto the deck (motivated, for example, by using the right hand to move the card case aside). Then execute a double turnover (page 130) to display the Two of Spades. This method is only appropriate when the logic of the presentation allows you to see the card, although in an extreme case you could turn your head away as you turn up the card and display it.

Indirect Methods

In these clever methods, the X-card is used to force the Two of Spades. Once you understand the principle, numerous other possibilities become available to you—some of which will be introduced later in this course.

The Crisscross Force

As soon as you know the spectator is going to take the wrong card, say, *"...and turn that card face up."* Casually cut the cards, bringing the Two of Spades to the top of the deck. Then have the face-up X-card inserted into the deck and cut the cards at that point. Place the upper packet on the table, put the face-up X-card on top of this, and finally the lower packet on top of everything. Introduce a time delay, then offer the spectator the card located just below the face-up X-card. This is a variation on the crisscross force, which was described on page 85.

Another Trick

To avoid prolonging the program unnecessarily (which is only critical for formal programs), quick alternative tricks are recommended; that is, tricks that can be performed in less than a minute and that maintain the performer's control of the force card.

Of course, I have only outlined a few of the possibilities for correcting a missed force. But perhaps this attempt to systematize the options will help you to find and categorize your own favorite method.

Final Observations

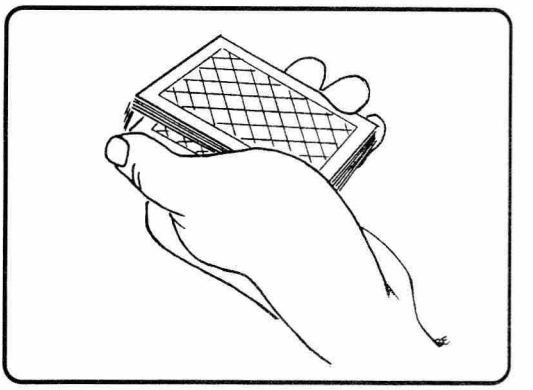
A familiarity with the available outs will have a significant influence on your inner game, since you will then know there are one or more ways you can proceed should the force fail. With some performers, this knowledge produces such an increased self-confidence, the force nearly always succeeds!

The Riffle Force

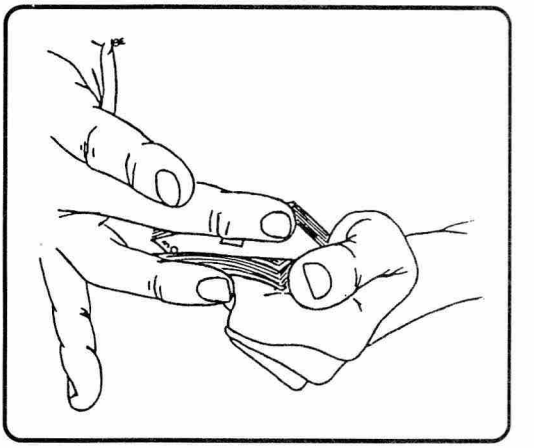
In this force, you first shuffle the deck, then hold it in left-hand dealing position while you riffle the outer left corners of the cards off your left thumb until a spectator calls *stop.* The deck is cleanly and openly separated at that point—yet the spectator has been forced to take the card that you require. The psychological and technical details of this riffle force handling differ significantly from those of the more common and well-known method. It is so compelling that even experienced magicians are deceived. I developed this handling after meeting Rainer Teschner, a magician from Nürnburg, at the 1980 German Card Workshop. There Mr. Teschner showed me, among other remarkable things, a very interesting handling of the riffle force, in which he split the deck open with his right middle finger in a most convincing manner. This handling forms the basis on which I built the technique described here.

The force card is on top of the deck. As you turn toward a spectator, prepare for the force just as you would for the classic force (see page 217), but position the force card about a third of the way down from the top of the deck and form a left little-finger break above it.

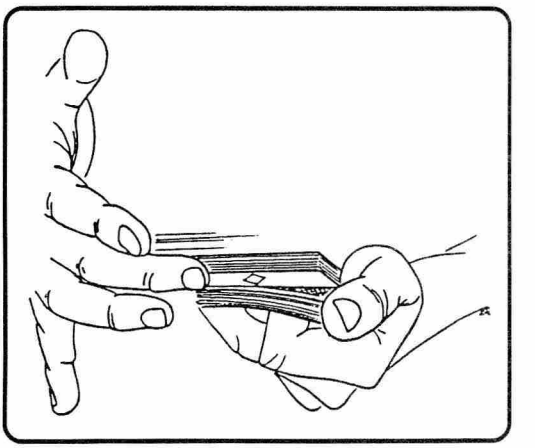
Bend your left index finger under the deck to apply an upward pressure as you riffle downward with the left thumb. Time the riffle so that the spectator calls *stop* after you have passed the break, but as close to it as possible. This is necessary, as you will soon understand, to minimize the discrepancy in the thickness of the packets involved.



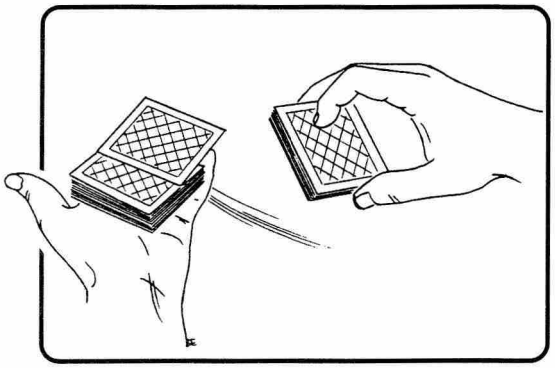
As soon as the spectator says *stop*, interrupt the riffle and, with the left thumb, pull down on the outer left corner of the packet below the visible gap at the outer end. Make the gap as large as possible as you say, *"Right here!"* This is not a question, but a confirmation. Look at the deck and try to focus the audience's attention on it as well. Then bring the right hand palm up in front of the deck, apparently to separate it at the visible gap. Place the tip of the right middle finger against the outer left corner of the card at the face of the upper packet. About one third of the outer phalanx of this finger should lie inside the gap. (This illustration and the next show views from the front.)



Slide the pad of the right middle finger to the right along the outer lower edge of the upper packet until it reaches the right corner. This widens the gap at the outer end still further.



As soon as the right middle finger reaches the outer right corner of the upper packet, turn your head aside and say, *"Please take this card—don't let me see it at all."* At the same time revolve the right hand palm down, moving the thumb to the inner end of the deck. As a consequence of this action, the pad of the right middle finger automatically rolls out of the gap at the outer end, but remains anchored on the end of the upper portion of the deck.



Grasp all the cards above the left little-finger break in right-hand end grip. Do not lift the right hand's packet; hold it still. Instead, lower the left hand slightly and move it forward with all the cards beneath the break. At the same time, relax the downward pressure of the left thumb, letting the gap close. As you extend the left hand toward the spectator, use the left thumb to push the top card to the right.

Don't move the right hand until the spectator takes the force card and the left hand returns with the balance of the packet. Conclude the sequence by reuniting the packets and squaring the deck.

Check Points

1. Pick a spectator to work with who is seated or standing at some distance from you. This justifies the use of a procedure that is somewhat unusual outside the company of magicians. *"Please, stay in your seat,"* you say. After all, if the spectator were closer, you would simply offer the spread deck for the removal of a card.
2. The use of the right middle finger is a crucial element. Most people expect you to separate the deck immediately upon your hearing *stop*, and consequently they focus all their attention on the deck at that moment. This is precisely the weakness of other handlings of the riffle force: The spectators' attention is focused *on* the deck and your hands at the critical moment. So we must introduce a handling that delays the execution of the technique. This is accomplished by separating the packets at the outer end with the right middle finger.
3. Note how loosely the top card of the left-hand packet slides over the tips of the left fingers in the final illustration. This underscores the impression of openness and fairness. Note too the position of the left thumb!
4. The remark *"Please take this card—don't let me see it at all,"* as you turn your head aside creates a slight diversion of attention or, at the very least, a reduction or division of focused observation.

More Tricks with the Force

The Jumping Pulse

Although this trick[52] takes only a moment to perform, it will make a long lasting impression on many spectators. In the course of the effect, one of the spectators is drawn into the action and performs the magic. Nonetheless, at the conclusion, the assisting spectator still has no idea of how the trick was accomplished.

Effect

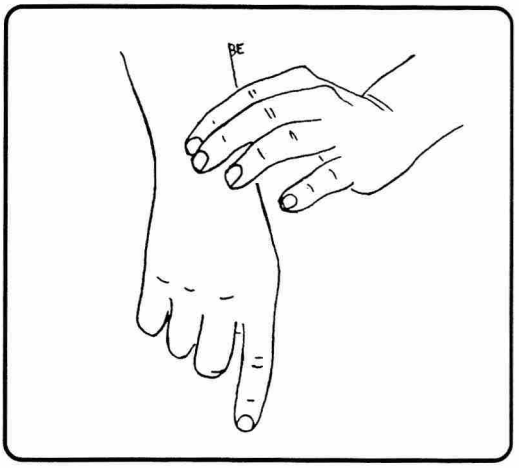
The performer divines the identity of a chosen card by feeling a spectator's pulse. Then the trick is repeated, but with the spectator feeling the magician's pulse and bringing an inexplicable feat to a successful conclusion.

Construction, Management and Script

Have a woman in the audience shuffle the deck. Then take it back and glimpse the top card. Here is a simple way to accomplish this: After retrieving the deck, spread it face up on the table and point out how well the spectator has mixed the cards. As you do this, inconspicuously note the top card, then flip the spread face down (page 183) and gather it. (Other methods of glimpsing the top card will be explained in Chapter 23, *Volume 2.*)

Force this card on the woman, preferably using the classic force. Tell her she is to note her card without showing it to anyone else. Finally, ask her to place her card face down and to one side. She may also cover it with the card case or some other object lying on the table. Assume the card is the Three of Hearts.

"It is possible to determine a person's reactions to statements by detecting a change in pulse rate. The idea is similar to that behind lie detectors. Would you mind if I feel your pulse?" Take your helper's wrist and locate her pulse. If you don't know how to do this, it is a good idea to learn this simple skill, rather than pretending. If your medical technique is obviously faulty, many in your audience will see through your fraud, which will in turn undercut the believability of your presentation.



You could say something like *"You must not be here at all—you have no pulse."* But please avoid double entendres and statements in questionable taste. Once you have found the pulse, begin to name the four suits: *"Hearts—clubs—diamonds—spades. Yes, that was very clear. When I said 'hearts' your pulse jumped. Your card must be a heart."* Continue

immediately, without waiting for a confirmation: *"And now the value. Ace—Two—Three—Four..."* Name all the values, pause, then start naming them again from the beginning. This second time pause after you say "three" and announce, *"That was not so clear. You're trying to disguise it. But I am still fairly certain that your card is a Three—it must be the Three of Hearts. Show everyone your card."* The woman turns her tabled card face up, confirming your statement to the unbounded amazement of all present.

You can stop the trick at this point, as it is impressive enough by itself. But if you sense that the audience is following the presentation with interest, you can take it a step further. *"Of course, this should also work if you do the same thing to me."* Take a card from the deck, which the spectator has shuffled, look at it and place it face down on the table or under the card case. Let's assume it is the King of Clubs. Now it is the woman's turn to feel your pulse. *"You know, this is not really necessary, but it's my favorite part of the trick."* As the spectator is finding your pulse, place the tips of the thumb and middle finger of that hand together. When she names your suit, lightly press the thumb and middle finger together. She is waiting for your pulse to jump at some point and when she feels this small but distinct movement she will say that she sensed something at clubs. *"Good, then quite possibly my card was a club."* As she recites the values, lightly press your thumb and middle finger together again when she says *"king"*. The woman will then suggest that you are thinking of the King of Clubs. To confirm this, show the card to everyone. Often the assisting spectator will not know herself how she divined the card. She will simply assure everyone who asks that your pulse clearly jumped as she named the correct card!

Headliner!

The following trick is a spectacular prediction for special occasions. It does require some advance preparation, but it is worth the effort. The basic plot goes back to at least the 1930s. In 1937, Theodore Annemann mentions a use of it by Kenneth Chamberlain.[53] Here I've updated it, through a bit of modern technology.

Effect

The spectator chooses a card, which the performer fails repeatedly to divine. After pointing out that all the most important events of the day are in the daily newspaper, he asks a second spectator to choose a page—and found printed on that very page is a large image of the chosen card!

Preparation

Take the daily newspaper and open it up to a page with very few or no photographs. Papers like the *New York Times* or the *Wall Street Journal* are ideal for our purpose, as they contain relatively few photos. Using the single sheet feeder of a large photocopy machine, copy a Jumbo card onto the center of one of the inner pages of the newspaper (for our explanation, let's say it is page nine). With a red ink cartridge or a color copier you can even copy a red card or a court card. This provides even greater contrast and visibility.

The trick is most effective when performed with the current edition of the newspaper. Place your prepared paper near the performing area. If you know you will be the guest of someone

who subscribes to a particular paper, find an opportune moment to exchange his copy for a duplicate that you have prepared.

Construction, Management and Script

The card whose image is on page nine of the newspaper is on top of the deck. Let's say it is the Six of Clubs. Beneath the Six of Clubs is the Nine of any suit. Turn to a spectator and riffle force the Six of Clubs. *"That is your personal lucky card. Take a good look at it and place it aside face down."* The spectator does as requested.

When the card is removed from the deck, maintain the little-finger break between the halves. The Nine is now directly under that break. Riffle force it on a second spectator. *"This second card will determine a number. If it is a court card rather than a number card, please replace it in the deck and take another one."* These words reinforce the impression that the spectator has a free choice.

Turn back to the first spectator and ask him to pick up his selection and concentrate on it. After a brief effort, you name the wrong card. Repeat this by-play a second time. Finally explain, *"Of course, it's really not that important. Because if it were important, it would certainly already have been published in the newspaper. Would you please show all of us your card?"* The spectator displays the Six for all to see.

Turning to the second spectator, you ask, *"By the way, have you had a chance to read today's paper? Did you notice anything? No?"* Meanwhile, have your host hand you the newspaper, or pick up the copy that "just happens" to be nearby. Pass it to the second assisting spectator.

"A short while ago you removed a number card from a shuffled deck. That will determine the page in the newspaper." Have the second spectator turn over his card, revealing the Nine. *"Please open the paper to page nine. Perhaps you'll find an answer to the question concerning our friend's card."* Initially the spectator may not notice anything, especially if it is a black-and-white photocopy. Then suddenly everyone will see the jumbo Six of Clubs. If they are able, the spectators may now wish to write impossible sounding letters to the editor.

Final Notes

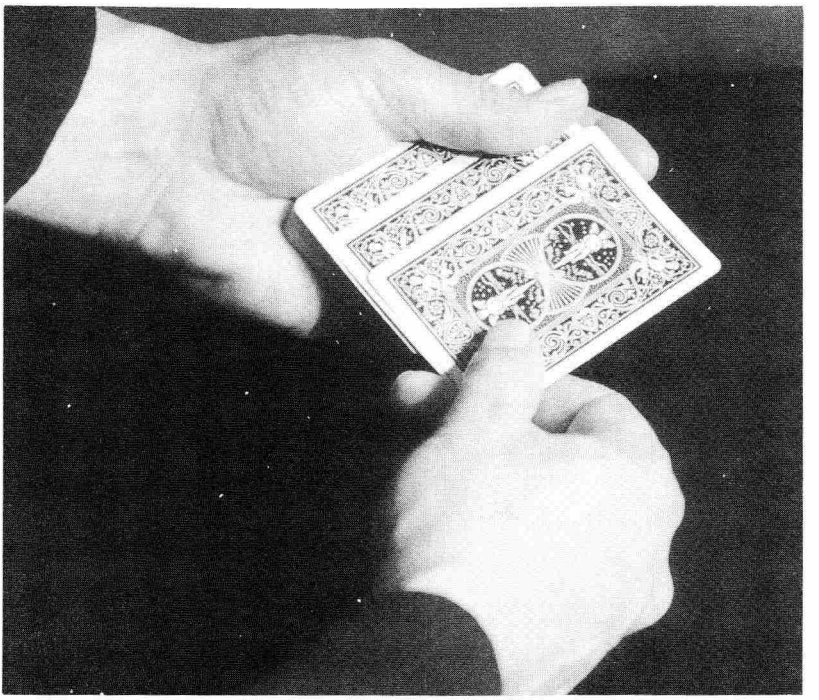
1. You can use a riffle force for the first card and a classic force for the second. If you choose to do this, place all four Nines just below the Six of Clubs. This will give you a four-card leeway for your classic force.
2. You can also perform this trick in a restaurant. Come somewhat in advance of the guests and order the daily paper. Secretly exchange it for your prepared copy, which you then "return". Should anyone else read the paper in the interim, it is unlikely the preparation will be noticed—and what does it matter if it is? Even more devious: In the afternoon, stop by the establishment where you plan to meet your friends that evening and order a cool beer. While you are there, exchange the papers. Then, that evening, don't show up until all the others have arrived.

CHAPTER 16

THE TOP CHANGE

"The more simple and natural the movements of the performer, the less likely is the spectator to detect the trick."

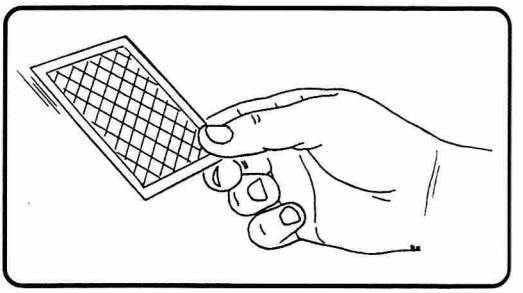
Jean-Eugène Robert-Houdin



Changes are sleights that enable you to exchange one or more cards secretly for different cards. In this chapter we will study the classic top change, in which a single card held in the right hand is imperceptibly switched for the top card of the deck held in the left hand. The technique taught here is an improved handling by the French past-master, Robert-Houdin.[54]

The Top Change

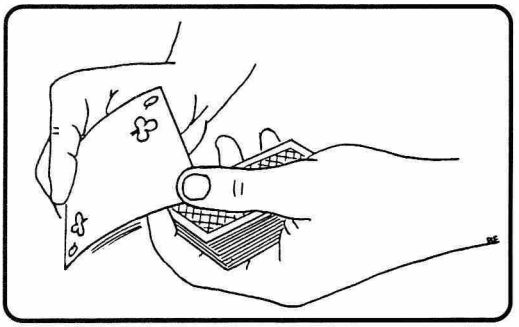
For our purposes, let's assume a specific situation: You have one spectator seated to your right at the table and another to your left. A card is chosen (it's an Ace) by the spectator on your right, and controlled secretly to the top of the deck. Another spectator takes a second card (a Queen) and you hold this in your right hand. The Queen is to be exchanged imperceptibly for the Ace.



Hold the deck face down in left-hand dealing position. Grasp the card to be exchanged (the Queen) face down by its inner right corner, right thumb on the back and right index finger on the face. Position your right middle finger with the side of its outer phalanx contacting the edge of the card near the inner right corner.

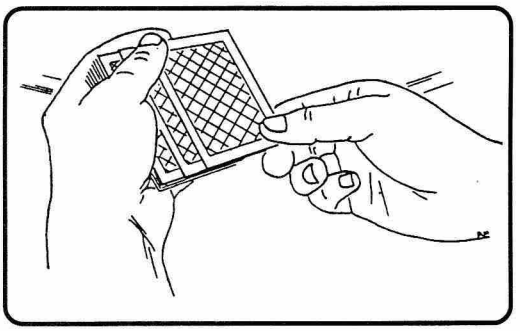
In this grip the card can be turned face up and face down again by revolving it around the outer phalanx of the right index finger, using a slight downward pressure of the middle finger and a turn of the wrist. The card is under your complete control. This grip makes the handling easier, more natural in appearance and economical in motion.

Turn the face of the card toward the audience and away from yourself, holding it so that it is clear to the spectators that you cannot see the face. As you do this, look at the first spectator and exclaim, *"And here is your card!"* The illustration shows the audience's view from the front.



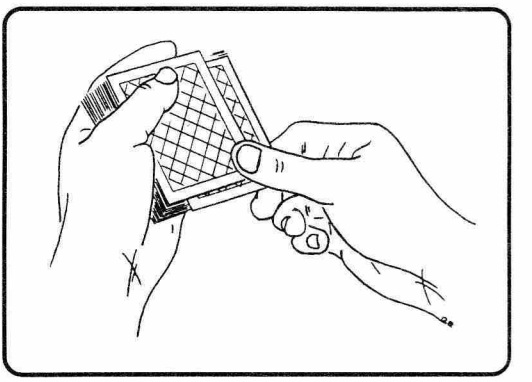
Either the spectator will say nothing or he will try to correct you. Using the tips your left thumb and index finger, grip the outer left corner of the right hand's card and bow the card inward toward yourself to look at it. *"That wasn't your card?"*

After asking this, raise your head and look at the spectator on your right. At the same time, turn the card in your right hand face down, holding it parallel to the floor. Next turn your head toward the spectator on your left, and at the same time, relax your right hand and bring its card over the deck. (This view is from the front.)



As you bring the Queen over the deck, push the top card (the Ace) about half an inch to the right. Straighten the right index finger slightly, causing its pad leave the face of the Queen and form a V-shaped opening between fingertip and card. (The crease of the outer joint of the index finger should now contact the right side of the Queen.)

The right side of the protruding Ace can be fed into this opening. As you feel the Ace contact the pad of the right index finger, place the pad against the face of the Ace and pull it briskly to the right. Simultaneously, use your right thumb to push the top card of the pair, the Queen, to the left and under the left thumb. Do not raise the left thumb—keep it in light contact with the top of the deck and, with a barely perceptible motion, use it to pull the Queen square onto the deck. You are now holding the Ace in your right hand in exactly the same grip just used to hold the Queen. The grip itself has not visibly altered.



Keep the right hand and its Ace still as you move your left hand and the deck away in a gesture to draw attention to the spectator on your left. As you do so, ask *"Did you see the card, too?"* The illustration again shows an audience view from the front.

Now move your right hand to the right, and simultaneously return the left hand to its former position in front of the body. Say to the spectator on your right, *"And the Queen of Clubs was really not your card?"* The exchange is now complete, and you can exploit the situation as required by the effect in progress. For example, you can have the spectator blow on the right hand's card, then reveal its transformation to the Ace.

Check Points

1. The timing and coördination of movements explained above is extremely important. First you move only the *right hand*, then only the *left hand*, and finally *both hands*. This blocking makes it seem as if the card and deck never touch. Though the larger actions taught here are given in the context of a particular trick and may change with the context, the finger motions are always the same.
2. After the exchange, the card is held between the thumb and index finger, exactly as it began. This is far more desirable than the original fingering for this sleight, in which the card began between the thumb and index finger, but after the change was clipped between the index and middle fingers.
3. Keep in mind that you never lift the left thumb during or after the exchange, as doing so would raise suspicions of a switch in the minds of observant spectators. The card is *pushed* under the thumb. It should never look as if the thumb reaches for the card.
4. Make a careful study of the following suggestions for covering the sleight, so that you can adapt the top change to other contexts.

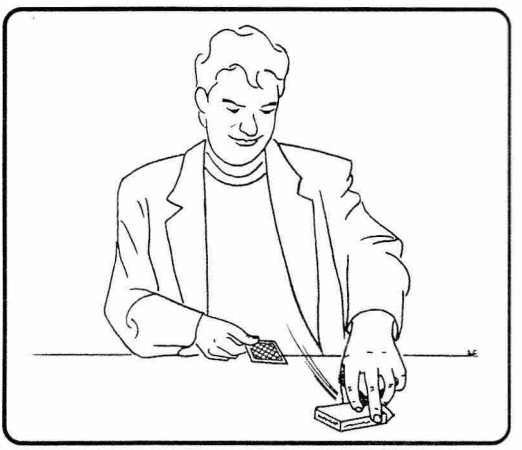
Top Change Covers

The top change, like palming and the pass (Chapters 18 and 19 in *Volume 2*), is a technique with no "external reality" (to borrow a phrase from the great Spanish master Arturo de Ascanio)—in other words, your audience should not be aware that any action has taken place. The technique is executed in secret, in contrast to overhand shuffle techniques, which simulate actual shuffle actions, or the glide, in which a card is actually taken from the deck. These sleights present an external reality, an overt and motivated action, for the spectator. This is not true of the top change, for which there is no automatic action to obscure the secret one; so one must be contrived. I will now describe several logical and natural cover actions for the top change. The basis for all of them is that there must be an overt reason (other than that of exchanging cards), or at least an implied one, for the hands to come together or cross.

Situation One: The spectator will be requested to extend one hand palm up. Ask, *"Are you right-handed or left-handed?"* Hold the card in your right hand in front of the deck. Immediately after asking this question and as you request, *"Hold out your hand with the palm up,"* move your left hand forward and past the right hand's card, executing the top change along the way. Your motivation in moving the left hand is to demonstrate how the spectator should extend the hand.

Situation Two: The blocking and motivation here are essentially the same as those just explained, but their presentation is a bit different. Say to the spectator, *"Please hold out your hand with the palm up."* Move your left hand forward past the right, executing the top change. The left hand then adjusts the spectator's hand as you say, *"A bit higher, please. Your hand must be exactly thirty-seven inches above the floor."* This humorous remark also contributes to the cover.

Situation Three: If you wear glasses, bring your relaxed right hand and its card over the deck and execute the change as you move your left hand upward to adjust your glasses. (Note: Contact lens wearers would be wise to forgo this ploy, which would only be understood by fellow insiders.)



Situation Four: With your left hand, pick up an object, such as the card case, from the table. As this hand passes the right, execute the change. Then, having grasped the object in the left hand, lift it slightly and place the right hand's card beneath it.

Situation Five: Display the right hand's card to those spectators on your right, then turn it face down again. Next, hand out the deck for shuffling, executing the top change under cover of this action. If you pass the deck, which is of course in your left hand, to a spectator on your right, your hands will naturally cross. And if you pass it to a spectator on your left you can use the same actions outlined in the original description; that is, bring the relaxed right hand and its card over the deck, and immediately move the deck forward, offering it for shuffling. The exchange of cards occurs during this seemingly innocent motion.

Obviously, you can think up many more situations that will accommodate the execution of the change. Take pains to consider only those situations that fit your style. As the actual exchange is executed, always look at the audience or pose a question to a particular spectator.

The Top Change as an Out for the Classic Force

In my examination of the classic force in the previous chapter I mentioned that the best direct exchange to use for correcting a failed force was the top change. Let me now show you how the sleight is adapted to this use. We will apply the strategy just employed in Situation Two. You have one spectator on your left, another on your right. You attempt the classic force with the person on your left, but it fails. The moment you see that the wrong card is going to be selected, instruct the spectator not to look at its face. As explained earlier, when this line is delivered promptly, it appears to be part of the planned course of action.

As soon as the spectator has removed the X-card from the spread, bring the force card to the top of the deck. Take the X-card from the spectator and turn toward the person on your right. Instruct this person to extend a hand, making a gesture with your right hand as you look at her, saying, *"Hold it precisely thirteen and three-quarters inches above the table."* The laughter that results from this silly request causes the spectators to relax their attention, at which time you pass your left hand near your right, on its way to adjust the level of the spectator's hand. As the left hand passes the right, execute a top change, exchanging the X-card for the force card, which you then place on the second spectator's hand.

TRICKS WITH THE TOP CHANGE

Metamorphosis

The handling of this effect was inspired by Larry Jennings's "Monarchs' Quartette".[55]

Effect

A spectator chooses a "prediction card", which is set face down to one side. After an initial mismatch, three cards randomly chosen by the spectator are ultimately shown to match the value of the prediction, giving you four of a kind!

Preparation

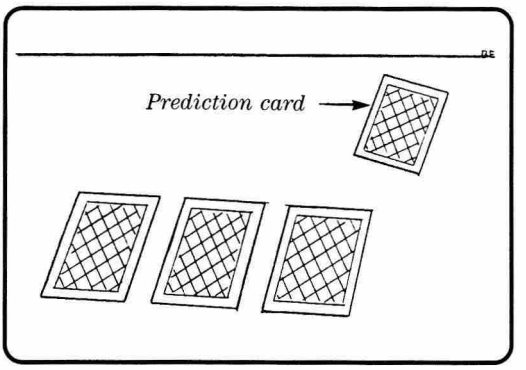
Arrange the four Kings on top of the deck, with the black Kings sandwiched between the red ones, or vice versa. Such a simple setup can easily be arranged in the course of a preceding effect. Often it is advantageous to use the spread cull described on page 187 to accomplish this.

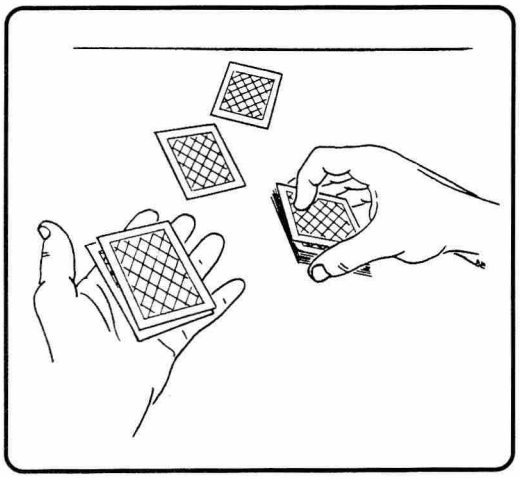
Construction, Management and Script

Force the top King on a spectator, using the riffle force (page 224) and place this "prediction card" face down to one side on the table. After the force, reassemble the deck with the remaining three Kings on top.

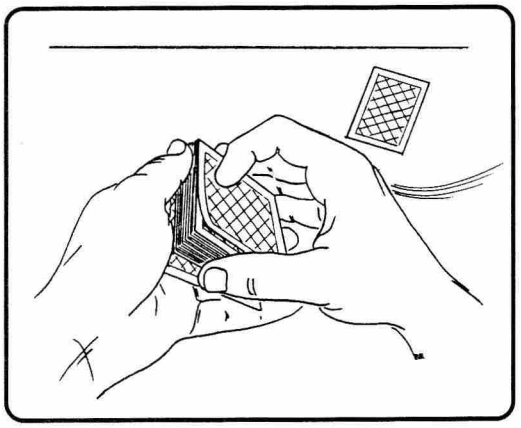
Take the deck in right-hand end grip and dribble the cards onto the table from a height of about seven inches, while you explain that you would like a second spectator to call *stop* when you repeat the action. Pick up the cards and dribble them again onto the table, stopping at the location specified by the second spectator.

"You need to pick out three cards. Would you like all three cards to come from the bottom of the top packet, the top of the bottom packet, or a combination of the two?" Following the instructions of the spectator, place three cards in a horizontal row on the table. As these are truly indifferent cards, it really doesn't matter which three the spectator chooses.

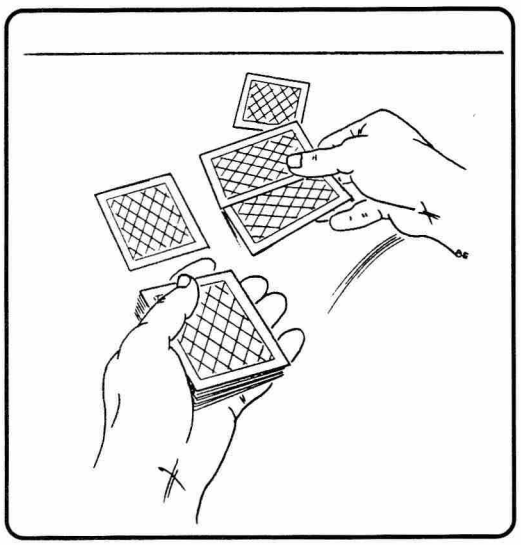




"We will only need one of these cards, so please tell me which two I should set aside." As you explain this, take the deck into left-hand dealing position. As you square the cards, form a right thumb break under the top two. Maintain this break as you take the deck into right-hand end grip. Pick up the two designated discards in your left hand, turning the left wrist as you display the cards in a spread. *"Let me show you the cards. If you like one of them, you can exchange it for the remaining card."* It doesn't matter what the spectator decides. Ultimately you will be in the position shown here.



You now exchange the two cards in the left hand for the two cards above the break in the following manner: With your right hand (which holds the deck), gesture toward the third chosen card, lying face down on the table. *"Let's look at the remaining card."* As you say this, first look at the card, then up at the spectator. At the moment you raise your gaze, bring your right and left hands together.



Place the deck into left-hand dealing position, squarely over the two cards already there; and, with your right hand, retain the two cards above the break, then move this hand in the direction of the tabled card. While doing this, slide the right thumb outward across the back of the cards, until you can grip the two cards at their outer ends. Use these two cards, which you hold face down and spread slightly, to flip the tabled selection face up.

This bold switch of the cards (called the Jinx change)[56] is done openly, but passes undetected because all the actions flow together and have an outward logic. Carefully study the dynamics of shifting the gaze and the smooth sequencing of the actions.

Table the right hand's two cards (now Kings) to one side. Next pick up the face-up card from the table and turn it face down in your right hand, in preparation for the top change. Let's assume this card is the Eight of Spades. *"Would you be surprised if this Eight of Spades matched the prediction card you chose and placed here on the table?"* Display the face of the card to those spectators on your right then shift your gaze to the tabled prediction card, toward which you gesture with your left hand. As you make this gesture, execute the top change, leaving the final King in your right hand. The timing and misdirection used here are identical to those described in the technical explanation of the top change. Use the right hand's card to flip the prediction card face up on the table. The cards apparently do not match.

"Of course, that would have been impossible. But then you should expect even more from me, namely, the unthinkable!" Rub the face of the right hand's card against that of the tabled King. Then slowly turn the face of the card in your right hand toward yourself, smile—and show the card to the audience, who should display their appreciation with dropping jaws. They naturally assume this is the end of the trick, but you press on. *"Perhaps you are asking yourself what would have happened had you chosen one of the other two cards? As you can see, that would have been no problem, as they are the other two Kings!"* Reveal the faces of the other two tabled Kings to your astonished audience.

The Lucky Coin

Effect

A spectator chooses a card and shuffles it into the deck. The deck is then ribbon spread on the table. The performer displays a lucky coin, which the spectator uses to chose a card via a process of elimination. After some humorous by-play, it is eventually revealed that the spectator has, through the aid of the lucky coin, managed to locate the chosen card.

Props

In addition to a deck of cards, you will need a large coin. Glue an easily recognized miniature card (for example, the Two of Diamonds) to the tail-side of the coin. If miniature cards are not available to you, you can use the index of a card from a regular deck. Place the coin in a small coin purse. If you wish, use a somewhat exotic coin and container, and write a suitably odd story to go with them.

Construction, Management and Script

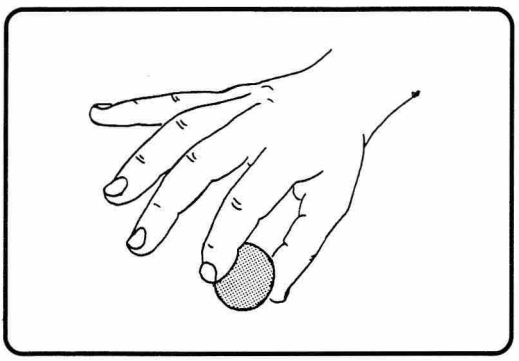
Secretly bring the Two of Diamonds to the top of the deck during a previous effect or use a cut or spread cull (page 187) to do so. Force the Two on a spectator, preferably with the classic force (page 217).

After the card has been shown to everyone, have it replaced in the deck, briefly shuffle the cards yourself, then hand the deck to the spectator to shuffle.

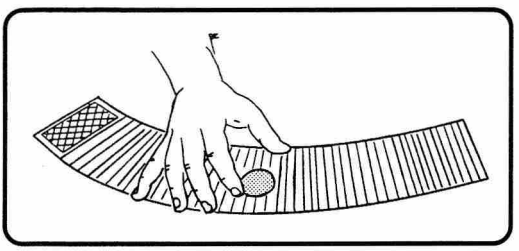
To achieve maximum misdirection at the climax, it is important that everyone knows the identity of the card. Don't forget to shuffle the deck briefly yourself, before handing it out

for mixing. Failing to do so may arouse suspicion that you already know the identity of the card.

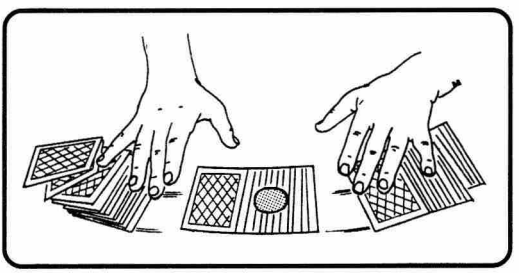
Take back the deck and, as you quickly spread it face up between your hands, bring the Two of Diamonds to the top with a spread cull (page 187). To motivate this action, say, *"You shuffled the card into the deck yourself. It might be anywhere—no one knows exactly where it is. But you do know which one it is. So you should find it yourself."* These remarks provide enough time for you to complete the cull. Close the deck and ribbon spread it face down on the table.



Take out the coin purse and exhibit the coin it contains—without exposing the miniature card, of course. *"This is my lucky coin. Perhaps it will bring you luck, too."* Grasp the spectator's wrist as you hand him the coin and instruct him to hold it by its edges between thumb and index finger. *"Hold it perfectly flat, with the head up."* Your unstated reason for this is to prevent the premature exposure of the miniature card.

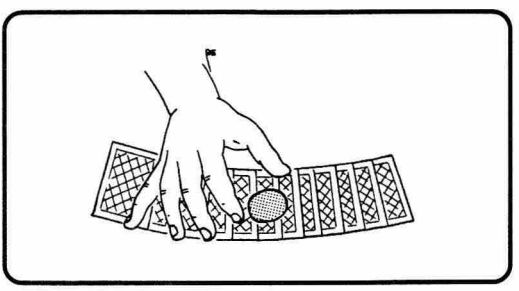


Once you are certain the spectator understands how he must hold the coin, have him move it horizontally along the spread deck and finally place it somewhere on the spread. Depending on the tightness of the ribbon spread, the coin will contact from eight to twelve cards.



Push the cards to the right and left of the coin aside, leaving about a dozen cards with the coin atop them.

Gather these discarded cards in an unsquared packet with the Two of Diamonds on top.

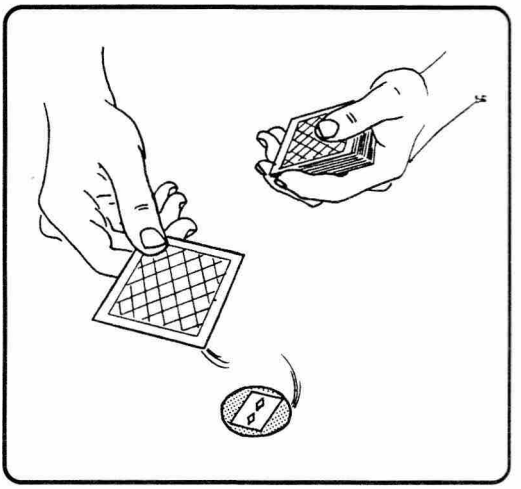


Adjust the remaining twelve or so cards, widening the spread, and repeat the selection procedure with the coin.

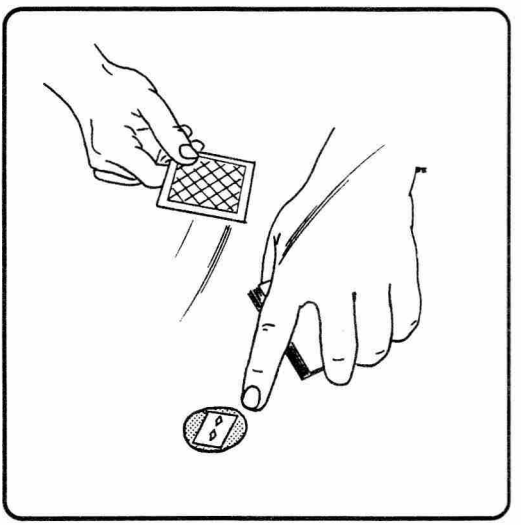
Again remove the cards to the left and right of the coin and insert them into the rest of the deck. The Two of Diamonds remains on top. Three or four cards should still be under the coin on the table.

Deliberately shuffle these remaining few cards and deal them into a face-down row. Hand the spectator the coin and ask that it be placed on one of the cards. When this has been done, say, *"Are you certain this is the card you want?"* Ask this emphatically, to underscore its importance, and let the spectator change his mind if he wishes. Some in the audience will already have guessed where the effect is headed, but still will not be able to believe it, as the conditions have been so utterly fair. Once the spectator has settled on a card, replace the others in the deck, which you then briefly spread between your hands as you explain, *"Now remember, you could have placed my lucky coin on any of the fifty-two cards."* Square the deck and hold it in left-hand dealing position.

"It would be a small miracle if your card was underneath my lucky coin, don't you agree? For the first time, name your card. The Two of Diamonds? And look—here, under the lucky coin is the Two of Diamonds!" With your right hand, pick up the card under the coin, grasping it in readiness for the top change, and use it to flip the coin over on the table.



Look at the miniature card on the coin as you slyly remark, *"You see, here, under the coin is a Two of Diamonds."* This remark is directed toward those who may not yet have recognized the card on the coin. During the instant that the spectators understand the joke and smile or laugh, bring the right hand back to your body and execute the top change as you move the left hand forward with the deck to point to the coin.



Immediately shift your attention from the spectators to the coin and slip the card in your right hand beneath it again—but this time with the miniature card displayed on the coin. *"I know, that wasn't bad, but you are probably a bit disappointed. You expected the real*

card under the coin to be yours, and I took advantage of you with a silly play on words. But don't forget that you chose one card from this deck using the lucky coin." Spread the deck briefly between your hands, then set it aside as you look meaningfully at the spectators and say slowly and emphatically, *"And do you know why this is my lucky coin? Because the card under the coin really is your Two of Diamonds!"* A cognac for everyone, if you please.

Final Note

You can avoid the spread control by simply controlling the force card to the top after the force. But I recommend the above version: first, because it is more convincing; and second, because it provides excellent cover for practicing multiple techniques.

Bibliographic Notes

Publication dates shown reflect those of first editions; however, in instances where publishers have changed, the publisher thought to be most recent is given.

[1] See page 36, *The Royal Road to Card Magic*, Faber and Faber: London, 1948.

[2] See "Reaping the Aces" in *Genii, The Conjurors' Magazine*, Vol. 29, No. 4, Dec. 1964, Larsen: Los Angeles; page 220. This trick can also be found in *The Classic Magic of Larry Jennings*, by Mike Maxwell, L & L Publishing: Lake Tahoe; 1986, page 130. It is only fair to add that there has been some controversy concerning the creator of this method, and some believe it to be Edward Marlo's.

[3] This Stover refinement appeared in *Million Dollar Card Secrets* by Frank Garcia, Million Dollar Productions: New York; 1972, page 93. However, Mr. Garcia failed to mention the L-shape traced by the fingertip. This touch, although seemingly minor, is stressed by Mr. Stover as an important element to the cut. It is mentioned in this text for the first time, with Mel Stover's kind permission.

[4] See "Falsches Mischen" in *Der moderne Kartenkünstler* by Conradi-Horster, Edition Olms: Zürich; 1896, page 19. Although such false cuts go back centuries, the first handling explained is frequently credited to Jay Ose. See *Close-up Card Magic* by Harry Lorayne, Louis Tannen: New York; 1962, page 93.

[5] See *3 Pet Secrets* by Nick Trost, Hades Publications: Calgary; 1964, page 3.

[6] See Method 3 under "Three Methods of Eliminating the Pass" in *The Eliminators* by U. F. Grant, O'Neil Magic: Columbus; 1943.

[7] See *Cy Endfield's Entertaining Card Magic, Part 2* by Lewis Ganson, Supreme Magic: Bideford; 1956, page 21.

[8] See *Revelations* by Dai Vernon, Magical Publications: Pasadena; 1984, page 141.

[9] See *Fingertip Control* by Edward Marlo, Marlo: Chicago; 1956, page 18.

[10] See *Dai Vernon's Ultimate Secrets of Card Magic* by Lewis Ganson, L & L Publishing: Lake Tahoe; 1995, page 101.

[11] See *The Card Classics of Ken Krenzel* by Harry Lorayne, Harry Lorayne, Inc.: New York; 1978, page 212.

[12] See *The Tarbell Course in Magic, Volume 5* by Harlan Tarbell, D. Robbins & Co., Inc.: Brooklyn; 1948, page 96.

[13] See "The New Knife and Selected Cards" in *The Magical Monthly*, Vol. 2, No. 10, July 1925, Edward Bagshawe: London; page 199.

[14] See *Ken Krenzel's Close-up Impact* by Stephen Minch, Hermetic Press: Seattle; 1990, page 13, for historical background on this force, which is based on Henry Christ's 203rd force.

[15] See "Another Spectator Cuts the Aces" in *The Unexpected Card Book* by Edward Marlo, Marlo: Chicago; 1974, page 209.

[16] A published source is not known.

[17] See *Stars of Magic*, D. Robbins & Co., Inc.: Brooklyn; 1946, page 15.

[18] See page 389, *Expert Card Technique*, Dover, Publications, Inc.: New York; 1940.

[19] See *The Expert at the Card Table* by S. W. Erdnase, Magic, Inc.: Chicago; 1902, page 38.

[20] The Diaconis trick that inspired me may be found in *Revelations* by Dai Vernon, page vii. Those who preceded me in the handling I devised were Jack McMillen and Judson S. Brown, with their "Telltale Color" in *The Sphinx*, Vol. XXXIII, No. One, March 1934, Sphinx Publishing Corp: New York; page 12. McMillen and Brown made the glimpse of the selection while riffling off half the cards to divide the deck for a dovetail shuffle. Milbourne Christopher, working from a note written by Jean Hugard several months after "Telltale Color" was published, used a tabled riffle shuffle as the moment to obtain the glimpse. See *Hugard's Magic Monthly*, Vol. XVIII, No. 9, May 1961, page 99.

[21] While this red-black shuffle is frequently credited to Laurie Ireland, it was first published in 1919, in a trick titled "The Dealing Dovetail Detection" by Charles T. Jordan, in his *Thirty Card Mysteries*, Magic, Ltd: Oakland; page 25.

[22] See *Genii, The Conjurors' Magazine*, Vol. 36, No. 5, May 1972, Larsen: Los Angeles; page 228. This also appears in *Card Secrets of Bruce Cervon: The Real Work* by Bruce Cervon, Cervon: Los Angeles; 1976, page 32.

[23] See *Faro Controlled Miracles* by Edward Marlo, Marlo: Chicago; 1964, page 46.

[24] See "P. P. P. P." in *The Linking Ring*, Vol. 49, No. 10, Oct. 1969, International Brotherhood of Magicians: Kenton; page 66. Subsequently, Father Cyprian, Shigeo Takagi, Gary Ouellet and others devised variant handlings of the idea.

[25] A published source is not known.

[26] See *The Best of Benzais* by John Benzais, Haines House of Cards: Norwood; 1967, page 37.

[27] Karl Fulves reports that Michael Schwartz described this flop-over production in a 1983 letter to him. To secure credit for Schwartz, Fulves published his description in *New Card Rises*, Fulves: Teaneck, N.J., 1996; page 13.

[28] This plot first saw print by Marlo under the name "Penetration" in *The Sphinx*, Vol. XLVII, No. Four, June 1948, Sphinx Publishing Corp.: New York; page 89.

[29] See "The Partagas 'Sell'" in *Farelli's Card Magic, Part Two* by Victor Farelli, Edward Bagshawe & Co.: London; 1933, page 42.

[30] See *The Royal Road to Card Magic*, page 67.

[31] Conveyed to the author personally. Believed to be unpublished.

[32] See *The Jinx*, No. 80, February 1940, D. Robbins & Co., Inc.: Brooklyn; page 522.

[33] See *The Magic of Jimmy Grippo* by Geno Munari, G-M Pulbication: Las Vegas; 1981, page 23.

[34] For information on Moe and his "Move a Card" trick, see *Moe and His Miracles with Cards* by William P. Miesel, Jeff Busby Magic, Inc.: Oakland; 1986.

[35] See *Paul Rosini's Magical Gems* by Rufus Steele, W. F. Steele: Chicago; 1950, page 32.

[36] See *Dai Vernon's More Inner Secrets of Card Magic* by Lewis Ganson, Supreme Magic Co.: Bideford; 1960, page 76.

[37] See *The Pallbearers Review*, Vol. 9, No. 5, March 1974, Fulves: Teaneck; page 715.

[38] See *Off the Top* by Edward Marlo, Magic, Inc.: Chicago; 1945, page 6.

[39] See *More Magic* by Professor Hoffmann, Martin Breese: London; 1890, page 9.

[40] See *Dai Vernon's Tribute to Nate Leipzig* by Lewis Ganson, Supreme Magic Co.: Bideford; 1963, page 170.

[41] See "...*and a Pack of Cards*" by Jack Merlin, Tannen's Magic: New York; 1929, page 20.

[42] See *More Card Manipulations, No. 2*, by Jean Hugard, Dover Publications, Inc.: New York; 1939, page 25 [73].

[43] By Ottokar Fischer (English translation by S. H. Sharpe), Dover Publications, Inc.: New York; 1910, page 26.

[44] The earliest printed reference for this forcing idea discovered to date appears in *The Magic World*, Vol. 2, No. 2, April 15, 1918, The Magic World Publishing Co.: Philadelphia; page 7. This article, unearthed by Jon Racherbaumer, bears no author or attribution for the force.

[45] Published in Fred Robinson's lecture notes, Robinson: London; c. 1981, page 14. It also appears in *The Ken Brooke Series, Number 5* by Ken Brooke, Ace Place Productions Ltd.: Liverpool; 1982, page 1. However, very similar approaches to this force preceded Mr. Robinson's. See, for instance, "Imperfection Force" in *Marlo in Spades* by Edward Marlo; Magic, Inc.: Chicago; 1947, page 8.

[46] See *Deck Deception* by Edward Marlo, Magic, Inc.: Chicago; 1942, page 11.

[47] See *The Royal Road to Card Magic*, page 191.

[48] See *Collins's Card Conceits* by Stanley Collins, Collins: London; 1925, page 14.

[49] See Elmsley's "Still Taking Three" in *Pentagram*, Vol. 10, No. 12, Sept. 1956, Warlock: Nottingham; page 91; and Marlo's "Face-up Switch and Effect" in *The New Tops*, Vol. 4, No. 2, Feb. 1964, Abbott's Magic Manufacturing Co.: Colon; page 17. Students interested in the complex history of this concept will also wish to read Jon Racherbaumer's commentary in *The Olram File*, Vol. 1, No. 4, April 1991, The Cardician Press: Chicago; page 12; and Stephen Minch's in *The Collected Works of Alex Elmsley, Volume II*, L & L Publishing: Lake Tahoe; 1994, page 116.

[50] See *The Secrets of Conjuring and Magic* by Robert-Houdin (English translation by Professor Hoffmann), Magico: New York; 1868, page 147.

[51] *The Secrets of Conjuring and Magic*, page 150.

[52] This trick is closely modeled on "The Pulse Trick" described in *The Royal Road to Card Magic*, page 226.

[53] See *The Jinx*, No. 31, April 1937, page 198.

[54] See *The Secrets of Conjuring and Magic*, page 151.

[55] See *Dai Vernon's Ultimate Secrets of Card Magic* by Lewis Ganson, L & L Publishing: Lake Tahoe; 1969, page 65.

[56] Jack Merlin, on page 52 of ...*and a Pack of Cards*, describes a closely related precursor of this bold switch. Mr. Merlin may have brought the idea from the gaming tables.

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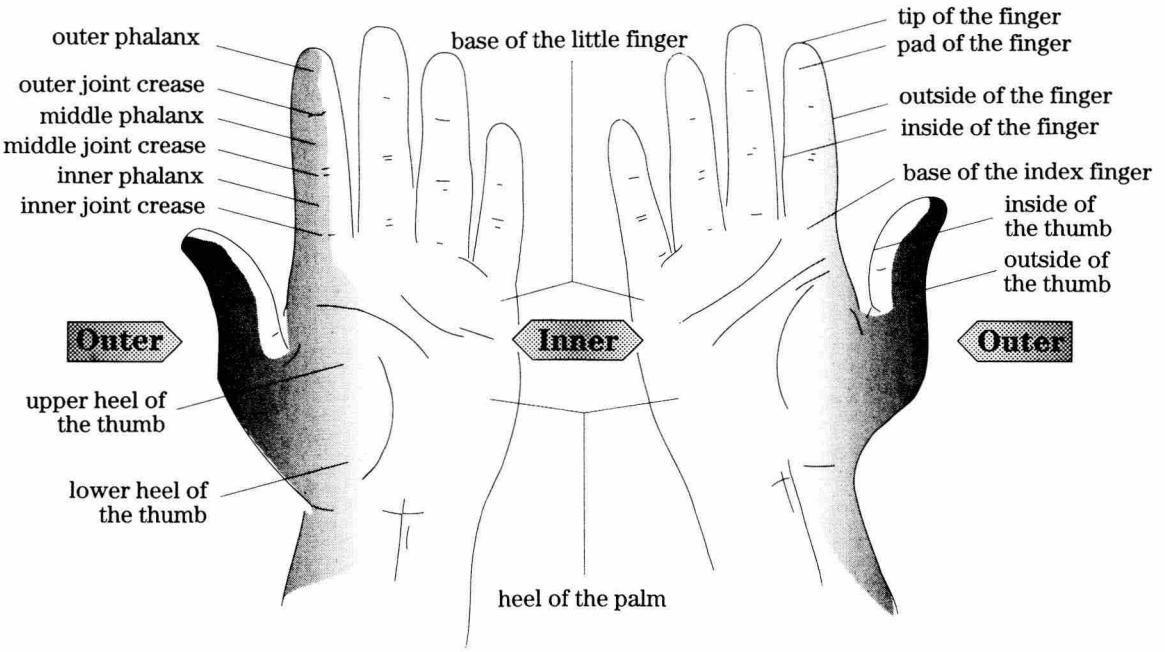

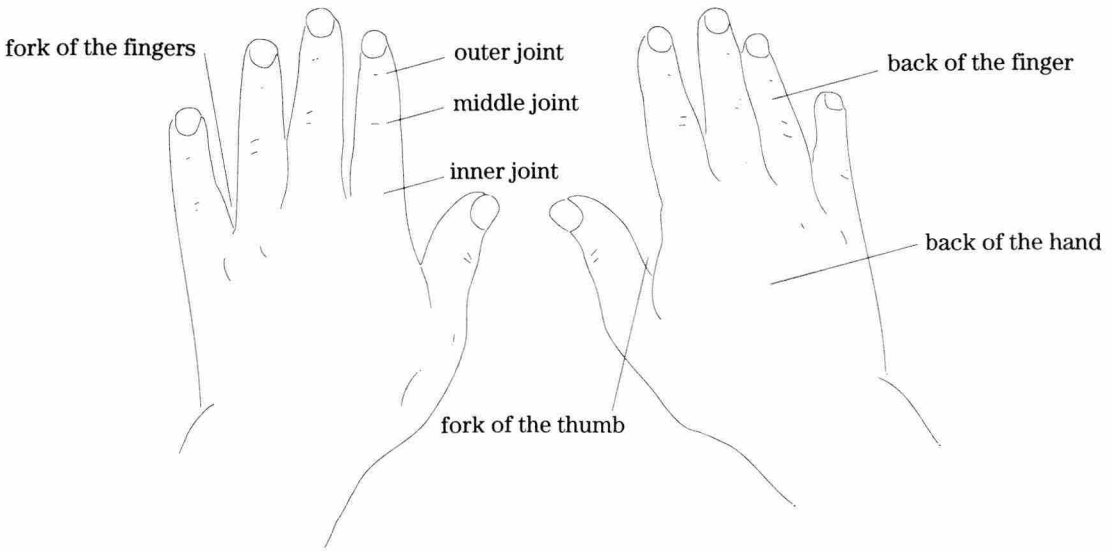
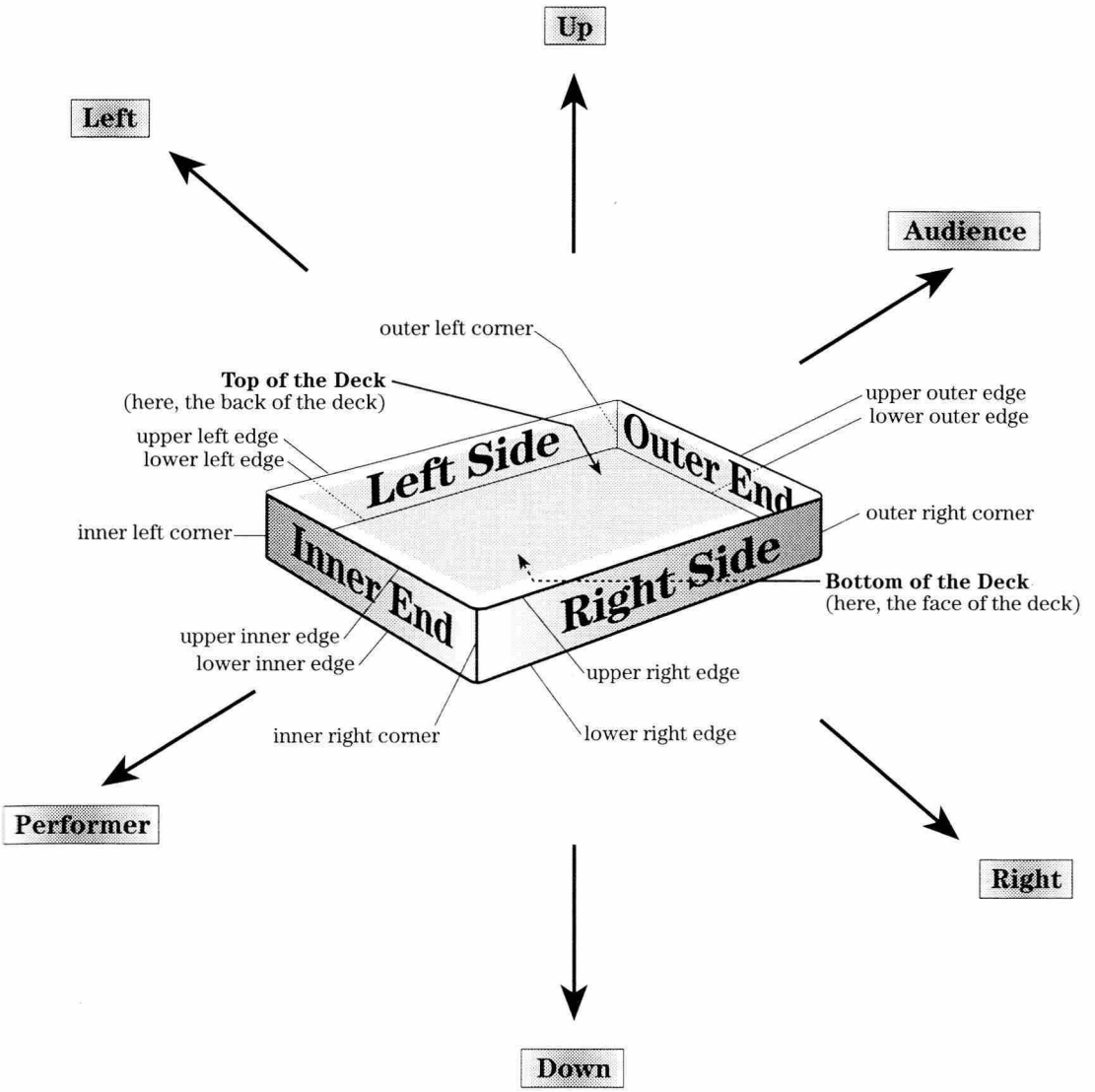
Map of the Deck